

Volsunga Saga

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VQLSUNGA SAGA

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THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

The Saga of the Volsungs

Edited and Translated
with Introduction, Notes and Appendices

by

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R.G.F.

INTRODUCTION

1 *The Volsungs and Wagner*

Although a knowledge of Iceland's mediaeval saga literature is now becoming more widespread, it is still far from having come into its own, and Njall, Egill and Hrafnkell scarcely enjoy the fame of Beowulf, Roland or the Cid. Whereas the latter belong, if only as names, to the common literary stock of the average educated reader, the former, as yet, do not. The main characters of *Volsunga saga*, however, are a notable exception to the rule, and the saga-writer's statement in ch. 23, that his hero's name 'is current in all the languages spoken north of the Greek Ocean and so it will be for as long as the world endures', contains a germ of truth. There can be but few who have not heard of Sigurd (or Siegfried), his deeds of bravery, his love for Brynhild (or Brünnhilde) and his murder at the hands of those he trusted best, for Richard Wagner drew largely on the lays of the Icelandic Poetic Edda for the basic material of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and on *Volsunga saga* which, although containing additional material and differing in certain matters of detail, is essentially a prose retelling of the relevant Eddaic lays.

Wagner's *Ring* cannot, however, be equated with the ancient Scandinavian legends that it seems to tell: it is by no means a modern dramatisation of *Volsunga saga* or of the Eddaic lays, and Wagner, in attempting to recreate the primitive 'myth' became an innovator on a grand scale whose genius produced an entirely new 'myth' in accordance with his poetic and musical purpose. His approach to the material was eclectic and arbitrary. For example, the shattering of Wotan's spear by Siegfried with a sword of his own forging is pure invention, as is the claim that Siegfried is the child of an incestuous union between brother and sister, although according to *Volsunga saga*, his half-brother, Sinfjotli, was indeed born of such a union. Sigurd's mother in Edda and Saga was named Hjordis, not Sigelinde who appears as his mother in the MHG epic *das Nibelungenlied*. Odin (i.e. Wotan) is not, in the Icelandic version, solely responsible for despoiling the dwarf of his gold: moreover, the dwarf's name was Andvari, not Alberich, whom Wagner took over from the *Nibelungenlied*, where he plays a different rôle. In fact, the 'Rheingold' springs largely from

Wagner's fertile imagination, and the idea of the inevitable conflict between lust for power, symbolised by the ring, and true love is his alone, arising in part at least, as so many of his themes, out of the social and political situation of his day.

2 *Fornaldarsögur and Völsunga saga*

The *fornaldarsögur*,¹ the Sagas of Ancient Times, the genre to which *Völsunga saga* belongs, deal with semi-historical or legendary events and personages of Scandinavian history before the colonisation of Iceland (870-930), and of early East Germanic history, thus embracing both the later Viking Age and the Age of Migrations. These sagas are often termed romantic, and if one of the characteristics of Romanticism is a nostalgic looking back to the glories of a distant and largely imaginary past, then to that extent at least the majority deserve the epithet. Of course, a marked preoccupation with history characterises the bulk of Iceland's mediaeval prose, whether it be the earliest historiography proper, such as Ari Þorgilsson's *Book of the Icelanders* (*Íslendingabók*) and the *Book of the Settlements* (*Landnámabók*), or the Kings' Sagas, or indeed the great Family Sagas. These latter, written before the *fornaldarsögur*,² tell of events in the comparatively recent past, Iceland's own heroic age, extending approximately from 930 to 1030. Here, history is combined with art, fact with fiction, but however fictitious the material, the historical effect is ever striven for, and with considerable success. *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, for instance, is so convincing in its realism that although almost entirely fictional, as shown by Professor Sigurður Nordal, it was long believed to rest on genuine historical tradition. It is a far cry from such a saga to the typical *fornaldarsaga* where the wondrous and fantastic tend to gain the upper hand, where the human is replaced by the well-nigh super-human, where the heroic spirit degenerates into mere heroics and literary qualities count for little. *Völsunga saga* is unfortunately not exempt from such strictures. Sigurd himself, in the one full description given of him (ch. 23), is pictured as larger than life, nor is it enough for him merely to kill the man who has dealt him a mortal wound:

¹ The term derives from the title of C. C. Rafn's collection, *Fornaldar Sögur Norðrlanda*, 1829-30.

² The *fornaldarsögur* have a pedigree at least as respectable as that of the Family Sagas; there is evidence to show that tales akin to the extant *fornaldarsögur* were known to early oral tradition, see C. Tolkien, *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, 1960, vii, and de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 426 f.

he throws his sword which slices his murderer clean through at the waist (ch. 32). There are, in general, ample adventure and letting of blood for their own sakes. There are also some structural weaknesses, e.g. Signy's two children are twice slain, Brynhild is twice betrothed to Sigurd, and her residence seems to vary between a 'shield castle', a normal Norse hall, and a castle surrounded by a wall of leaping flame. These deficiencies may not all be due to the failure of the compiler of the saga to remove some of the inconsistencies in his sources—a less skilled interpolator may be partly responsible. It must, however, be admitted that the compiler has on the whole little feeling for the poetry of his poetic originals. That he should, where necessary, use words and phrases more appropriate to saga style than the often purely poetic vocabulary of his sources is right and proper—that he should occasionally, e.g. in his rendering of *Sigurðarkviða in skamma*, st. 6–12 (the beginning of ch. 32), dismiss lines of considerable force in a few trite sentences, is hardly excusable.

Yet in spite of all, it is difficult not to be impressed by this tale which has as much to do with character and fate as it has with the clash of arms. Sigurd's youthful self-confidence that defies the curse on the treasure changes into the realisation that he is inextricably enmeshed in the toils of fate. Brynhild, whose code of honour cannot but demand the death of the man she loves and from whom fate has kept her apart, voluntarily ends her life in the flames of his funeral pyre. Hogni meets death with a laugh on his lips, and his brother Gunnar achieves true heroic stature in defeat. Such material, however naïvely presented, cannot fail to make its impact, even on the sophisticated reader of the twentieth century.

3 *Völsunga saga and its analogues*

(a) *Scandinavian*

(i) *Völsunga saga (VS)*. The oldest MS dates from c. 1400. The saga itself was compiled not later than c. 1260–70, probably in Iceland, though possibly in Norway (see section 6).

(ii) The *Poetic Edda (PE)*. The oldest MS (Codex Regius) dates from c. 1270.¹ The date of the original compilation is uncertain: not after c. 1250 and possibly as early as the second half of the twelfth

¹ See de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 479, G. Lindblad, *Studier i Codex Regius av äldre Eddan*, 1954, 241.

century.¹ Eighteen of the lays preserved in the Codex Regius relate to the Volsung material and of these twelve, along with some of the connecting prose, were utilised by the compiler of *VS*, which also contains a prose redaction of a lost section of *PE* (a complete gathering, probably eight leaves).

(iii) *The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson (SnE)*. The oldest MS dates from the early fourteenth century.² The original work was not completed before 1225.³ The second section (*Skáldskaparmál*) contains a brief version of the material.

(iv) *Þiðriks saga af Bern (ÞSS)*. The oldest MS dates from the end of the thirteenth century.⁴ It was compiled in Norway probably c. 1250–60.⁵ The Volsung story is one of the heroic themes woven into the legendary history of Theoderic the Great, Ostro-Gothic ruler of Italy (493–526).

(v) *Norna-Gests Þáttur*. Preserved in two MSS of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*,⁶ it dates from the fourteenth century⁷ and gives an abbreviated account of the earlier part of the material, ending with Sigurd's death and Brynhild's journey to the underworld. There are some accretions.

(vi) *Völsungsrímur*. These are six late mediaeval Icelandic metrical romances, corresponding to *VS* ch. 1–8, the oldest MS dating from c. 1550. They were probably written shortly before 1400⁸ and may be based on a rather different and older version of *VS* than that extant.⁹

(vii) *Scandinavian ballads*. The earliest MSS date from the sixteenth century. The ballad tradition began in Norway probably c. 1300; the Faroese ballads are at least a century later. The relevant extant ballads are—Norwegian: *Sigurd Svein* (there is also a Swedish version); Danish: *Sivard Snarensvend* (the Norwegian *Sigurd Svein*),

¹ See F. Jónsson, *Litt.* I, 116 f. G. Lindblad, op. cit. 276, argues that the earliest possible date is the beginning of the thirteenth century, his terminus ante quem being c. 1240. He rejects the theory of an earlier Norwegian exemplar proposed by D. A. Seip, 'Har Nordmenn skrevet opp Edda-Diktningen', *Maal og Minne*, 1951, 3–33, and 'Om et norsk skriftlig Grunnlag for Edda-Diktningen', *ibid.*, 1957, 81–195.

² See Jónsson, *SnE* vi. There is a later paper MS which is a copy of a lost vellum dating from c. 1280: see F. Jónsson, *Litt.* II, 678 f.

³ See de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 342

⁴ See Bertelsen, viii

⁵ See Bertelsen, lvi

⁶ See R. C. Boer I, x

⁷ See de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 442

⁸ See Bj. K. Þórolfsson, *Rímur fyrir 1600*, 1934, 49 and 300 ff.

⁹ See F. Jónsson, *Litt.* II, 835; M. Olsen, ed. lxxxii ff.; Þórolfsson, op. cit. 304, does not agree.

Sivard og Brynhild (there are also some Norwegian fragments), *Grimhilds Hævn*; Faroese: *Regin Smiður, Brinhild, Högni*.¹

(viii) The *Hven Chronicle*, translated from Latin into Danish in 1603, gives a markedly divergent version of the material. The original Latin is not extant.²

(b) *German*

(i) *Das Nibelungenlied (NL)*. The earliest MSS date from the thirteenth century; the poem itself was written not later than the early years of that century, probably before 1204.³ The MSS containing a complete text append the *Klage*, probably written c. 1220–1230.⁴ It tells of the obsequies of the dead heroes. There are also two Middle Dutch fragments of *NL* (MS 'T').

(ii) *Seifrid de Ardemont*. Written by Albrecht von Scharfenberg c. 1280, this romance is preserved only in the late fifteenth-century redaction by Ulrich Füetrer in his *Buch der Abenteuer*.⁵ Siegfried is linked with Arthurian romance and becomes a knight of the Round Table. After many adventures he marries the princess Mundirosa and they live happy ever after.

(iii) The *Anhang zum Heldenbuch*. The *Heldenbuch* was first printed in 1477. Its text is close to that of a slightly older Strasbourg MS which contains a preface later published as a supplement (*Anhang*) to the *Heldenbuch*. The *Anhang* gives a confused version of mainly the latter half of the *NL* though it also contains elements of an ancient Nibelung tradition.⁶

(iv) *Das Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid (HS)*. This is only extant in printed texts dating from the sixteenth century and was probably written in the fifteenth century, though it contains some older traditional material. It deals chiefly with the hero's youthful exploits.⁷

(v) *Der Hürnen Seufrid*, a drama by Hans Sachs written in 1557 and based partly on *HS*, partly on the MHG *der Rosengarten*, and partly, perhaps, on some third, unknown, source.⁸ It ends with the hero's death and a promise of vengeance.

¹ See Schneider I, 70 f.

² See *Hven*. 14

³ cf. de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, xxxix f.

⁴ See de Boor, *Lit.* II, 167, and *Die Klage mit den Lesarten sämtlicher Handschriften*, ed. K. Bartsch 1875

⁵ See *Merlin and Seifrid de Ardemont von Albrecht von Scharfenberg, in der Bearbeitung Ulrich Füetters*, ed. Friedrich Panzer, 1902

⁶ cf. Schneider I, 93. The relevant text may be found in W. Grimm, *Die Deutsche Heldensage*, 4th ed. 1957, 332 ff.

⁷ There is an excellent edition by Professor K. C. King, Manchester University Press 1958.

⁸ See Hans Sachs, *Der hürnen Seufrid*, ed. E. Goetze 1880

(vi) *Volksbuch vom gehörnten Sigfrid*. A chap-book first printed in 1726 and based on *HS*.¹

References to the Volsung-Nibelung legend in mediaeval literature are widespread. Sigmund and Sinfjotli (OE Fitela) are mentioned in the OE *Beowulf*² and in the fragmentary tenth-century Norse poem *Eiríksmál*³; Volsung (OE Wæls), Sigmund's father, is also named in *Beowulf*.⁴ Gjuki (OE Gifica) and his son Gunnar (OE Guðhere) are mentioned in the OE *Widsíp*,⁵ and the latter and Hogni (OE Hagena) appear in the OE *Waldere*.⁶ The *Flateyjarbók*,⁷ a late fourteenth-century Icelandic compilation of Kings' Sagas, mentions Sigurd as best bearing the torments of Hell. As Sifrit, he appears in thirteenth-century MHG poems (extant only in late MSS) of the Dietrich cycle (cf. (a)iv above), viz. *der Rosengarten*,⁸ *Biterolf und Dietleib*⁹ and *die Rabenschlacht*.¹⁰ The thirteenth-century MHG poets Hugo von Trimberg¹¹ and der Marner¹² make passing references to Nibelung tradition. *Waltharius*,¹³ a mediaeval Latin poem dating from the Carolingian or Ottonian era, belongs to the same cycle as the OE *Waldere* and also treats of characters known to Nibelung tradition. Even an occasional historical chronicle, such as the late thirteenth-century Latin *Chronica Hungarorum* of Simon Kézai,¹⁴ makes use of Nibelung material. Names of some of the main characters, e.g. Haguno, Kriemhilt, Nipulunc, Sigfrid, Sintarfizzilo (Sinfjotli) and Welisunc (Volsung) appear as personal names in German deeds and charters as early as the eighth and ninth centuries.¹⁵

A knowledge of the legend has often stimulated artistic and literary

¹ See E. Bernhöft, *das Lied vom hörnenen Sigfrid*, Rostock 1910, 98

² Klaeber, I, 874 f.

³ See F. Jónsson, *Litt.* I, 446 f. The numerous references in skaldic poetry to the Volsung cycle are listed and discussed by H. Hungerland, 'Zeugnisse zur Volsungen- und Niflungensage aus der Skaldendichtung (8-16 jh.)', *Arkiv XVI* (1904), 1-43, 105-42.

⁴ Klaeber, I, 897

⁵ R. W. Chambers, *Widsith*, 1912, ll. 19 and 66

⁶ F. Norman, *Waldere*, 2nd ed. 1949, I 25, II 15. The names Gūðere and Sigeferð appear in the OE poem *The Fight at Finnsburg* (Klaeber, 245 ff.) which is not part of the Volsung-Nibelung cycle.

⁷ *Flateyjarbók*, I, 416

⁸ Especially st. 322-70 of the A version, see G. Holz, *Die Gedichte vom Rosengarten zu Worms*, 1893

⁹ See O. Jänicke, *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Teil I, 1866

¹⁰ E. Martin, *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Teil II, 1866

¹¹ In his *Renner*, ed. G. Ehrismann, 1908-11, ll. 16188-94

¹² Ed. Philipp Strauch, 1876, XI 2, XV 14

¹³ Ed. K. Strecker, 1947, with German translation by P. Vossen

¹⁴ See Wais, *Frühe Epik*, 32 f.

¹⁵ See e.g. Heusler, *NSL*, 29, and Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 278

imagination. Scenes from the Volsung cycle have been found carved in wood or stone in Sweden, Norway and England and possibly on the Isle of Man.¹ The Icel. *Laxdæla Saga*² seems to reflect the Sigurd-Brynhild-Gudrun triangle, while the late Icel. *Filipó rimur*³ shares at least a motif with *VS*. Ibsen's *The Vikings at Helgeland*⁴ has obvious affinities with *VS*, and there are several nineteenth-century German literary treatments of the theme⁵ apart from Wagner's, and more recently Max Mell wrote a drama, *Der Nibelunge Not*.⁶

4 *The basic themes, the major variations and their significance*

VS falls into five sections :

(a) Chapters 1-12. *Sigurd's genealogy in narrative form.*

Sigi, outlawed for murder, is helped by Odin, his father, and founds a kingdom. Sigi is slain but is avenged by his son, Rerir, who remains childless until he eats of an apple sent by Odin. His son is Volsung, father of Sigmund and of Signy. Sigmund wins a sword plunged into the great tree growing in Volsung's hall, for he alone can draw it forth. Volsung, treacherously attacked by Siggeir, Signy's unloved husband, falls in the battle; his sons are captured, set in stocks in the forest and left to a lingering death. A she-wolf appears every night, devouring brother after brother until Sigmund alone remains. He slays the wolf, escapes and lives on in the forest, Siggeir believing him dead. Signy's two sons are too cowardly to be of help to Sigmund in avenging his kinsmen, and Signy, herself eager for vengeance, contrives to sleep unrecognised with her brother and bears him a son, Sinfjotli, who is thus doubly in the line of Volsung and with Sigmund a worthy avenger. After preliminary exploits, including a period as werewolves, they fire Siggeir's hall. Signy, her vengeance complete, chooses to perish in the flames. After further adventures, mainly with his half-brother Helgi, Sinfjotli is poisoned by his stepmother, Borghild. Sigmund falls in battle, his sword breaking against Odin's spear.

(b) Chapters 13-25. *Sigurd's birth and youthful exploits.*

Sigmund's second wife, Hjordis, gives birth to Sigurd at King Hjalprek's court after her husband's death. Sigurd's foster-father, Regin, a smith,

¹ See H. Schück, *Studier i Nordisk Litteratur- och Religions-historia* I, 1904, 172 ff. and N. Nicolaysen, *Norske Bygninger fra Fortiden*. X, 1879.

² See de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* I, 384

³ Ed. by Th. Wisen in *Riddara-Rimur*, Copenhagen 1881

⁴ Published 1858

⁵ See E. Tonnelat, *La Légende des Nibelungen en Allemagne au XIX^e Siècle*, 1952

⁶ Max Mell, *Der Nibelunge Not*, Pt I, 1943; Pt II, 1951

persuades him to ask the guardians of his father's property for a horse. His request is granted and Odin helps him in his choice. Regin tells Sigurd of his father, Hreidmar, of his two brothers, Otr, who often assumed the semblance of an otter, and Fafnir. The god Loki, journeying with Odin and Hœnir, slew Otr in his animal shape. Hreidmar demanded that in compensation they stuff the otter skin with gold and then heap gold over it. Loki extorts the necessary gold, including the ring, Andvaranaut, from the dwarf, Andvari, who lays a curse upon it. Fafnir murdered his father, appropriated the gold and guards it in the semblance of a dragon. Sigurd agrees to slay Fafnir if Regin provides a sword. Sigurd shatters his first two swords, but the third, Gram, forged from Sigmund's broken blade, stands every test. Sigurd persuades Gripir his uncle to tell his future. Then Sigurd avenges his father, afterwards seeking out Fafnir. Helped in his strategy by Odin, he slays the dragon. He roasts its heart for Regin, burns his fingers and in cooling them tastes Fafnir's blood. He immediately understands bird language, and from the twittering above him learns of Regin's proposed treachery, and of Brynhild. He slays Regin, loads Fafnir's treasure, including the sword Hrotti on to his horse, mounts and rides off. He finds a warrior asleep in a 'shield castle'. This is Brynhild, a former valkyrie. Sigurd awakens her from an enchanted sleep, a punishment laid upon her by Odin who also doomed her to marriage, though she swore she would accept none who knew fear. Brynhild teaches Sigurd runic and other wisdom and they plight their troth. Sigurd next visits Heimir, Brynhild's brother-in-law. He finds that Brynhild is also there and they renew their vows.

(c) Chapters 26–33. *Sigurd's marriage to Gudrun, his death and Brynhild's suicide.*

King Gjuki and his wife, Grimhild, have three sons, Gunnar, Hogni and Guttorm, and a daughter, Gudrun, who knows Brynhild, described here as Atli's sister. Brynhild interprets Gudrun's dream as foretelling two marriages and their consequences. Sigurd arrives at Gjuki's hall and becomes a great asset. He forgets Brynhild because of a potion administered by Grimhild, and marries Gudrun, becoming blood-brother to Gunnar and Hogni. Gunnar determines to win Brynhild, but cannot pass the flame barrier surrounding her hall. Sigurd exchanges shapes with Gunnar and succeeds in his stead. Brynhild accepts the supposed Gunnar, and for three nights they share the same bed with drawn sword between them. Sigurd takes from her Andvaranaut, the ring he had earlier given her in his own person, substituting another. Brynhild later gives Aslaug, her daughter by Sigurd, into Heimir's care, and marries Gunnar. When bathing together, Brynhild claims precedence over Gudrun by wading farther into the river. Quarrelling, they argue the merits of their respective husbands, and Gudrun shows Brynhild Andvaranaut, thus revealing the deception. Brynhild feels herself betrayed and perjured, for she

had sworn to marry him who braved the flames. To Gunnar she implies that when Sigurd slept with her in Gunnar's semblance, he betrayed Gunnar's trust, and she urges his murder. Gunnar consults Hogni, alleging Sigurd's misconduct, adding that his death would enhance their wealth and power. Hogni stresses Sigurd's value to them and advises against the killing, but Guttorm is incited to the deed; he transfixes Sigurd with a sword as he rests in bed with Gudrun. Sigurd slays his murderer, comforts Gudrun who still has her brothers, and dies. Brynhild laughs on hearing Gudrun's moaning. She now denies Sigurd's misconduct, stabs herself, mounts Sigurd's blazing funeral pyre, and so dies.

(d) Chapters 33-40. *The death of Gunnar and Hogni and Gudrun's vengeance.*

Gudrun reluctantly marries Atli who, greedy for her brothers' gold, treacherously invites them to a feast. Despite ill-boding dreams and Gudrun's warning they set out. On arrival at Atli's hall, they are attacked and captured. Gunnar refuses to reveal where the gold is hidden until he sees his brother's bloody heart. Hogni's heart is cut out. Gunnar exults that now he alone knows the secret which he will never disclose. He dies bravely in a snake pit. Gudrun, to avenge her brothers, slays her children by Atli, serving him a grisly meal of their hearts and blood. Later, helped by Hogni's son, Gudrun stabs Atli and fires his hall.

(e) Chapters 41-44. *Gudrun, Svanhild and Jormunrek.*

Gudrun tries to drown herself but the waves carry her to the land of King Jonakr whom she marries. Their sons are Hamdir, Sorli and Erp. Svanhild, Gudrun's daughter by Sigurd, is promised to Jormunrek, but he has her trampled to death beneath horses' hoofs for misconduct with his son. Hamdir and Sorli set out to avenge Svanhild. They kill Erp through a misunderstanding. After hacking off Jormunrek's hands and feet they put up a stout resistance for they are charmed against iron. On Odin's advice they are stoned to death.

VS is linked to *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar* through the person of Brynhild's daughter by Sigurd, Aslaug, whom Ragnar marries (for her early history see Appendix B).

It is clear from this summary that a break occurs between sections (c) and (d): Gjuki's sons slay Sigurd, their sister Gudrun's husband, this central event being preceded by an account of his ancestors and youthful exploits (a, b, c = Part I); Gjuki's sons are slain by Atli for their gold and avenged by Gudrun, now Atli's wife, whose unsuccessful attempt at suicide leads the story a stage further (d and e = Part II). Two separate stories concerning the same family are, in fact,

loosely linked through the person of Gudrun. It is in the conception of her rôle that the main variation lies, for in *NL* Kriemhilt¹ avenges, not her brothers on Etzel, but Sifrit on her brothers!²

Which theme is the older? More archaic is that of *VS* where blood ties mean more than marriage and clan solidarity enjoins acquiescence in the murder of one husband, and the vengeful destruction of another. The *NL*, where, through love of her dead husband a wife wreaks vengeance on his murderers, kinsmen or no, seems more 'modern', and in that it makes for the greater artistic unity of Parts I and II, less loosely linked than in *VS*, it is surely also the later in origin.³ Other considerations point to the same conclusion. How does it happen that Sifrit's murderers, while journeying to Etzel, are warned⁴ of the hostility facing them by a man who, in the service of their friend, the Margrave Rüdegêr, nonetheless bears the name of Kriemhilt's faithful follower, Eckewart? Even granting that two different characters have been confused,⁵ it is still difficult to see how 'Eckewart' happened to know Kriemhilt's secret plan which Dietrich von Bern, alone of Etzel's entourage, suspects. It is only if 'Eckewart' is seen as a messenger originally sent by Kriemhilt to warn her brothers of treachery that the incident makes full sense. Moreover, it is only in this same context that Kriemhilt's joy⁶ on seeing her kinsmen arriving with 'full many a new shield and gleaming hauberk' can be explained. There is little doubt that Kriemhilt's rôle in the *NL* is an innovation and a development of Gudrun's.

Does this imply that an Austrian poet in writing *NL* adapted a Scandinavian tradition? Andreas Heusler, a great scholar in the heroic Germanic field, did not think so.⁷ *NL*, he believed, was an expansion and fusion of two earlier poems that had evolved in clearly defined

¹ In *NL* the name Kriemhilt appears for Gudrun, Uote for Grimhild, Sifrit for Sigurd, Etzel for Atli, Brünhilt for Bryhild, Gibeche (though not as Kriemhilt's father, whose name appears as Dancrât) for Gjuki, Gunther for Gunnar, Hagen for Hogni, while two characters, Giselher and Gêrnôt do duty for Guttorm. In *NL* Kriemhilt, Gunther and his brothers are of the Burgundian royal house.

² *SnE* agrees here with *VS*, and *PE*, the other analogues which contain Part II, including *PSS*, agree essentially with *NL*. Atli's remark on vengeance, *VS* ch. 38, may be a faint echo of the German tradition.

³ H. Becker, *Warnlieder* I, 1953, 272 ff. argues most implausibly for an earlier origin.

⁴ *NL* st. 1635

⁵ See Heusler *NSL*, 55 and cf. de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, xxxiv

⁶ *NL* st. 1717

⁷ His *Nibelungen* publications began in 1905 with *Lied und Epos in Germanischer Sagedichtung* and culminated in *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied*, 1922, 5th ed. 1955.

stages. The first part of *NL* was the final stage III of the first poem. It was preceded by an unwritten Brünhilt Lay of the late twelfth century (stage II), which had developed from an unwritten Frankish Brünhilt Lay of the fifth to sixth century (stage I). The second part of *NL* was stage IV of the second poem. This was the final form of a written Austrian epic dating from *c.* 1160, dealing with the destruction of the Burgundians, i.e. Hagen, Gunther, etc. (stage III). This in its turn was based on an unwritten ninth-century Lay of the Burgundians in which Kriemhilt acted against her brothers (stage II), and this had developed from a fifth-century Frankish lay in which Etzel was the attacker (stage I). The Brünhilt Lay (stage II) and the Austrian epic (Lay of the Burgundians, stage III), were the major sources of *ÞSS*, while stage I of the Frankish lays gave rise to the Eddaic lays of Sigurd and Atli, and thus form the nucleus of Parts I and II of *VS*. Heusler also held that a second wave of German influence on Scandinavian tradition made itself felt in the thirteenth century.¹

Heusler's theory of development replaced the earlier theory of K. Lachmann² who had believed *NL* to consist of twenty linked lays, and this theory became orthodox belief, though modifications and objections have been made. A. Tonnelat³ stressed how conjectural his theories were. Doubting the existence of the earliest stages, he suggested⁴ that the lays belonged not to the fifth century, but to the eighth to ninth and were deliberately flavoured with earlier historical material. More extreme is H. Becker⁵ who dismisses the idea of antecedent stages,⁶ believing that *NL* is essentially the original work (soon revised by others) of a twelfth-century poet who drew on some traditional material including a twelfth-century lay of Sifrit's youthful exploits which perhaps found an echo in Scandinavia.⁷ The Eddaic lays of Sigurd's and Atli's death derive, he thinks, from *NL* itself via corrupt (oral) versions in which Etzel's character was blackened.⁸

¹ See A. Heusler, 'Die Quelle der Brünhildsage in Thidrekssaga und Nibelungenlied', *Festschrift W. Braune*, 1920, 84, cf. also Schneider I, 182 f.

² K. Lachmann, *Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichtes von der Nibelungen Noth*, 1816

³ In his *La Chanson des Nibelungen : Étude sur la Composition et la Formation du Poème épique*, esp. 180 ff. Tonnelat's ideas are influenced by the theories of the French Romance scholar, J. Bédier, who in his *Les Légendes épiques*, 1908, denies a long literary evolution to the French Chansons de Geste.

⁴ Op. cit. 302

⁵ H. Becker, *Warnlieder*, 1953

⁶ Op. cit. vol. I, Teil III *passim*, esp. 267, 288

⁷ Op. cit. vol. I, 254 f.

⁸ Op. cit. vol. I, 272 ff.

D. von Kralik¹ believed Heusler's theory too simple² to fit the facts. For Heusler's Brünhilt Lay he postulated three concurrent lays, a Brünhilt Lay³ (Siegfried wins Brünhilt for Gunther and is murdered in consequence), a Grimhild Lay⁴ (Siegfried is murdered for his treasure), and a humoristic parody of the former, Grimhild's Wedding.⁵ The first two, originally unconnected with the Burgundians, continued alongside new versions with the Burgundian milieu.⁶ Amid a welter of subjective argument one important concept emerges: that of originally parallel lays fused together, and Hermann Schneider, long, in most essentials, a follower of Heusler, came to express similar views.⁷

Kurt Wais has produced the most interesting theory of recent years.⁸ He, too, believes in a complex development of early lays and his arguments are more objective than Kralik's. A Frankish Brünhilt Lay, he argues, differing markedly from Heusler's, developed into the extant German and Scandinavian versions of Sigurd-Sifrit's death. The Lay of the Burgundians, he suspects, was complete in itself, Kriemhilt's vengeance on Attila being added later. Nor did the earliest Kriemhilt Lay, Gothic in origin, deal with Attila's death, but with subsequent quarrels concerning the succession, Kriemhilt supporting her son against the sons of another wife. His argument here seems ultimately to rest on a (perhaps too) firm belief in the value of Kezai's chronicle (see above) and on the antiquity of an Eddaic lay, *Guðrúnarkviða III*, usually judged to be of late origin.⁹ This earliest Kriemhilt Lay became linked and intimately fused with Gunther-Attila material, Kriemhilt avenging her brothers.¹⁰ Kriemhilt was later equated with Sifrit's widow, originally a different person, and becomes Sifrit's avenger.

Three important corollaries emerge from his arguments: first, the

¹ D. von Kralik, *Die Sigfriedtrilogie im Nibelungenlied und in der Thidrekssaga, erster Teil*, 1941, 870 ff. Subsequent volumes dealing with the genesis of the second half of the *NL* never appeared, but this, too, he believed, had evolved from more than one lay (p. 15); in *Von deutscher Art in Sprache und Dichtung*, II, 1941, 224 f. he speaks of a 'Grimhildrache' and a 'Nibelungennot'.

² Op. cit. 14.

³ Op. cit. 36 ff.

⁴ Op. cit. 120 ff.

⁵ Op. cit. 74 ff.

⁶ Op. cit. 66, 680.

⁷ See H. Schneider, *Die deutschen Lieder von Siegfrieds Tod*, 1947; the idea was not entirely alien to Heusler, see *NSL*, III.

⁸ Kurt Wais, *Frühe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes*, I, 1953, contains an essay by Hugo Kuhn, 'Brünhild und das Krimhildlied'.

⁹ e.g. de Boor, *Attila*, n. 55; de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 147 f.; F. Jónsson, *Litt.* I, 299.

¹⁰ That such a fusion could bring about the result required by the author seems rather doubtful.

extensive interaction of early lays; second, the need to reassert the concept of legendary tradition independent of poetic form¹; and third, the far-reaching influence of Volsung-Nibelung material on Romance and Celtic literature.²

Some scholars find fault with Heusler's Austrian Epic, denying its existence,³ or modifying its content⁴ and suggesting a different time or place of origin.⁵ Others, including G. Baesecke,⁶ postulated a Siegfried Epic (instead of a Brünhilt Lay) as the stage immediately preceding the first part of *NL*. Baesecke also asserted that the earliest Lay of the Burgundians was actually of Burgundian (not Frankish) origin.⁷ He agreed with Heusler that the change in Kriemhilt's rôle was due to Bavarian tradition which saw Attila in a favourable light, and not as a villain,⁸ but insisted that this new rôle was the only one known in Germany.⁹ De Boor had postulated that the conception of Attila in *VS*, *SnE* and *PE* was unknown to German heroic tradition¹⁰ and Kriemhilt's original rôle is certainly inseparable from that conception. However, the case against an early German lay with Attila as murderer and Kriemhilt as avenger of the Burgundians is not proven,¹¹ but even

¹ It was axiomatic for the Heusler school that the heroic tradition was inseparable from and indeed identical with heroic poetry, see e.g. Schneider I, 10, though much later he changed his opinion, see H. Schneider, 'Einleitung zu einer Darstellung der Heldensage', *Beiträge* LXXVII (1955), 76; Askeberg, 106, also hints at a legend independent of poetic form; see also F. Genzmer, 'Vorzeitsaga und Heldenlied', *Kluckhohn—Schneider Festschrift*, 1948, 1 ff., and Hans Kuhn, 'Heldensage vor und ausserhalb der Dichtung', *Genzmer Festschrift*, 1952, 262 ff.

² Leo Jordan, 'Girartstudien', *Romanische Forschungen* XIV (1903), 321 ff. had believed that mediaeval French epics were developed from Germanic heroic material. G. Brockstedt in several publications between 1907 and 1912 asserted the opposite, viz. the French origin of *NL*, and although his theory found little favour, scholars generally hold that French influence on the *NL* is unmistakable, e.g. S. Singer, *Germanisch-Romanisches Mittelalter*, 1935, 232 ff.; F. Panzer, *Das Nibelungenlied*, 1955, 62, 280 f., 314 f. Heusler himself agreed that certain elements were borrowed from France (Heusler, *NSL*, 21), and even Wais admits some cross-fertilisation (op. cit. 52 f.).

³ e.g. F. Panzer, op. cit. 275

⁴ e.g. H. Hempel, *Nibelungenstudien*, 1926, esp. 203 ff.: it also contained a version of the Sifrit story.

⁵ e.g. H. Hempel, op. cit. 3 ff.: Rhineland, c. 1125

⁶ G. Baesecke, *Vor- und Frühgeschichte des deutschen Schrifttums*, I, *Vorgeschichte*, 1940, 240 f.

⁷ G. Baesecke, op. cit. 270 ff. Schneider I, 442 seems to imply that the Burgundians did not create the heroic lays that have come down to us.

⁸ G. Baesecke, op. cit. 275 f. and A. Heusler, *NSL*, 29 f.

⁹ G. Baesecke, op. cit. 275 f.

¹⁰ de Boor, *Attila*, 24

¹¹ A passage in *Waltharius* (320 ff.) may be evidence of the existence of a German lay in which Kriemhilt plays her original rôle, cf. Schneider I, 198 f., and de Boor in his *NL* edition now follows closely in Heusler's footsteps.

if it were, it far from follows that Kriemhilt, now in Attila's rôle, acted from any motive other than that belonging to the rôle, viz. greed for gold.¹ It is tempting to think that the later mediaeval interest in the manifestations of love and passion which began to set such a marked stamp on German literature in the latter part of the twelfth century, if not itself the reason for Kriemhilt's new rôle, was at least responsible for the creation of a new motivating element, the desire for vengeance on the murderers of her now adored husband.²

From the presence of Kriemhilt's original rôle in Scandinavia and his belief in its absence in Germany, Baesecke inferred the transmission of continental Germanic heroic material to the North without German mediation,³ as de Boor had argued earlier.⁴ Such a theory runs counter to the Heusler school who believed that all the Burgundian-Gothic heroic themes reached Scandinavia via Germany.⁵ Fritz Askeberg, a Swedish scholar, argued vehemently against Heusler.⁶ He insisted that the absence in Northern tradition of specifically German themes (e.g. Iring, Wolddietrich, Walther) spoke against the idea, and that there was evidence that links existed between the Goths and the North during the Migrations.⁷ Askeberg also argued for an interchange of traditions between the Scandinavian Baltic and Germany along the North Sea coast.⁸ The German Sifrit material has certainly a northern orientation: Sifrit's Nibelungen domains are in Norway, while Brünhilt is Queen of

¹ When Kriemhilt greets her kinsmen on their arrival in Etzel's palace, she speaks of the treasure, not her love for Sifrit.

² The reference of the mediaeval Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus, to a minstrel singing of Grimhild's treachery against (not vengeance on!) her brothers in 1131 (see Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, ed. A. Holder, 1886, 427) is not proof of the existence of the new vengeance theme at that date nor even of the changed rôle, since Saxo was writing not earlier than 1179 and probably much later. It only shows that Kriemhilt's new rôle was known in the late twelfth century (cf. E. Tonnelat, *Nibelungen* 185 ff.). Wisniewski, *Niflungen*, 286 f., 302 ff. argues that parallel to the stage of development showing Kriemhilt as the avenger of Sifrit, there existed a version in which both Kriemhilt and Attila act against her brothers, Kriemhilt using Attila's greed as an instrument of vengeance.

³ Baesecke, *op. cit.* 268, 270

⁴ de Boor, *Attila*, 26 ff.

⁵ See Heusler, *Altgermanische Dichtung*, 151, and Schneider I, 33, and cf. p. xiv above

⁶ Fritz Askeberg, *Norden och Kontinenten i gammal tid*, 1944

⁷ Askeberg, *op. cit.* 103. He seems to equate German Nibelungen scholarship (which he mercilessly flays) with the Heusler school, and to be unaware that German scholars had thought on lines similar to his own.

⁸ Askeberg, *op. cit.* 104. Heusler admitted the possibility of a Scandinavian tradition in the *NL* in one instance only, see Heusler, *NSL*, 92. H. Schneider and others have also argued for Scandinavian influence on the German tradition, see Schneider I, 182.

Iceland,¹ not normally the home of princesses wooed by German knights-errant.²

Where among these theories lies the truth? That early Germanic heroes were celebrated in song is indisputable, that some of the characters belonging to the Volsung-Nibelung cycle were famed in Germany and the North long before *NL* and *PE* is certain, and that Sigurd-Sifrit, Gudrun-Kriemhilt and Atli-Etzel should be unknown to heroic tradition before the late twelfth century is scarcely credible. Heusler's belief in a lengthy development is surely justified, though the number and content of the early lays and the nature of their development cannot be finally determined from the source material extant. It is also quite possible that legendary and heroic traditions were not restricted to poetic form, that Scandinavia received the Burgundian-Gothic themes without mediation, and to answer the original question, that the Austrian poet, though not adapting a Scandinavian tradition, was using material that may have come under Scandinavian influence.

So much is certain: the German version of the Burgundian catastrophe is adapted from an older tradition to which *VS* is more faithful. As regards the second major variation the position is less clear. In *VS*, Sigurd is betrothed to Brynhild before he marries Gudrun-Kriemhilt, whereas in *NL* this is not the case, though in it there are passages that might indicate a German pre-acquaintance motif, deliberately, albeit imperfectly, effaced, presumably lest Sifrit's love for Kriemhilt be sullied by an earlier liaison.³ It is doubtful whether such a liaison would have had that effect—it is not unheard of in mediaeval literature for a knight to leave one lady for another without incurring particular censure⁴—and it is also doubtful whether the passages in question provide the required evidence. Admittedly, Sifrit knows of Brünhilt (st. 330) and of the resplendent apparel worn at her court (st. 344), and he acts as helmsman on Gunther's voyage to Iceland because he knows the proper routes (st. 378)—but then,

¹ Panzer, *Nibelungenlied*, 322 ff. repeats his earlier theory that the story of Brünhilt's wooing derives from a Russian fairytale, and does not admit that the *NL* references to *Íslant* (Iceland) and Norway betray Scandinavian influence; he sees *Íslant* as an echo of the name of Brünhilt's stronghold, *Ísenstein* (Iron Stone, i.e. Fortress), and Norway as an artificial parallel to it.

² Isolde, admittedly of western extraction, was princess of Ireland, but so was the unquestionably Germanic Hilde of the MHG epic *Kudrun*.

³ cf. Tonnelat, *Nibelungen*, 215

⁴ Witness Gawain's exploits in Wolfram's *Parzival* and those of Parzival's father, Gahmuret.

heroes were often credited with such knowledge¹ and Sifrit is acquainted with routes in general (the German has a plural). Thus he knows when they arrive (st. 382) and avoids a dangerous impasse through his knowledge of local etiquette (st. 407): there is no need to assume an earlier meeting with Brünhilt.² Admittedly, she greets Sifrit by name (st. 419)—after a retainer had informed her (st. 411) that one of the strangers resembled Sifrit—but she may simply have addressed herself to the most outstanding man present: it need not imply that either she or the retainer had seen Sifrit previously, for Sifrit's fame preceded him: Hagen, too, 'knew' Sifrit on his arrival at Worms without having seen him before³ (st. 86). Sifrit's earlier confirmation that the lady Gunther singled out for special praise was none other than Brünhilt (st. 939) can perhaps be viewed in a similar light or attributed to Sifrit's 'heroic knowledge'. Brünhilt's attitude towards Sifrit speaks against rather than for an earlier betrothal. She informs a retainer (st. 416) that she does not so fear Sifrit that she will submit to marrying him if he comes as a suitor, and her welcome (st. 419) is extremely uncordial. Later, she greets Sifrit differently from his companions (st. 511), and if this implies a continued lack of cordiality, such lack is not necessarily due to pique over a broken engagement—any aggressive plan she may have had would be frustrated by the reinforcements he had brought.⁴

Brünhilt's tears at the wedding banquet (st. 618) have been ascribed to disappointment at not marrying Sifrit.⁵ Even if this is so,⁶ her feeling for Sifrit need not antedate Gunther's expedition. Brünhilt's own words (st. 820) imply that she had seen neither Gunther nor Sifrit previously, and her explanation (st. 620), viz. that she is grieved because Kriemhilt, now her sister-in-law, in marrying Sifrit is marrying below her station (in Iceland Sifrit had pretended that Gunther was his lord) is entirely reasonable in a mediaeval context.

External evidence is not compelling. The account in *HS* of Sifrit's

¹ cf. Volker's knowledge of trans-Danubian territory (*NL*, st. 1586, 1594. and Hörant's knowledge of Hagen and Hilde of Ireland (*Kudrun*, ed. Boesch) 1954, st. 214, 226 f.) shared by his comrade-in-arms, Wate (*Kudrun*, st. 241 f.),

² Especially as the incident which leads to Sifrit's display of knowledge is probably a later addition, modelled on st. 1745, cf. de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, st. 406, note.

³ He, too, is said to have a knowledge of foreign lands (st. 82).

⁴ Arguments against the early existence of the pre-betrothal theme similar to those above have been advanced in other quarters, e.g. King, *HS*, 95, who in a footnote refers to Golther, writing in 1888, and Zarncke in 1856.

⁵ See, e.g. Schneider, I, 177

⁶ A strained interpretation on a par with the idea that Isolde loved Tristan before drinking the fateful potion.

rescuing a maiden from a dragon is almost certainly not the German version of Sigurd's awakening of Brynhild¹ and is not proof of the existence of the pre-betrothal motif in Germany. In *PSS*, which purports to be based on German sources, Sigurd does meet Brynhild before Grimhild (= Gudrun-Kriemhilt)² though she is not asleep and no betrothal takes place; a later retrospective reference to a betrothal may be due to contamination with purely Scandinavian tradition.³ Moreover, the whole episode with its fight between Sigurd and Brynhild's men may be largely a distorted version of the Gunther-Sifrit expedition, where success in winning Brünhilt's hand depends not on passing a flame barrier, but on superior prowess.

Lastly, the 'Lectulus Brunnehilde', the name of a particular configuration of rocks in the Taunus attested since 1043,⁴ is not necessarily connected with the Volsung-Nibelung cycle and may reflect the fame of the historical Visigothic princess, wife of Sigibert I, the Merovingian king who ruled Austrasia from 561 to 575.

The evidence is inconclusive and but for the Scandinavian tradition might never have seemed significant. Sigurd's betrothal to Gunnar-Gunther's future wife may be as native to Scandinavia as Kriemhilt's vengeance on her brothers is to Germany.

It need not, however, follow that the episode of Sigurd's awakening a maiden from an enchanted sleep is itself purely Scandinavian, since it could exist independently of any link with Gunnar-Gunther's wife. The name of the valkyrie punished by Odin may not, in fact, have been originally Brynhild. In the Eddaic *Fáfnismál* and *Sigrdrífumál* she is called Sigrdríf(a), nor is the exchange of vows recorded,⁵ and the *Gripisspá* also makes a distinction between an (unnamed) valkyrie and Brynhild.⁶ A 'Sleeping Maiden' adventure, without a specific Norse milieu, and without reference to Brünhilt, could thus also have belonged to the German Sifrit's youthful exploits, and the 'Sleeping Beauty'

¹ See King, *HS*, 91 ff.

² Bertelsen I, 315 f. (ch. 273)

³ Schneider I, 391, believes that an originally Scandinavian pre-betrothal motif influenced the German tradition where it became changed to a pre-acquaintance motif without the betrothal element.

⁴ See e.g. Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 37

⁵ Though the passage may have been lost, cf. A. Heusler in *Germanistische Abhandlungen Hermann Paul zum 17. März 1902 dargebracht*, 1902, 4.

⁶ It has, however, been argued, that Sigrdrífa was not originally a proper name but an epithet (perhaps 'bestower of victory') applied to Brynhild and later conceived as the name of a different person (cf. e.g. Schneider I, 146). H. Schneider argues that the whole episode of Sigurd's awakening Brynhild is a late arbitrary combination of existing motifs (Schneider I, 147).

story is known from Grimm¹ though there is no certain link between this and Sifrit.²

A major problem concerning Brynhild remains: her suicide. It is not an atonement for instigating the murder of the man she loved since the duty of vengeance took priority over most other considerations.³ In *VS* it is closely connected with her love for Sigurd—separated in life, united in death. It can also be seen as a form of 'suttee'⁴ whereby Brynhild claims her place at Sigurd's side, and either redeems her broken oath to marry the man who braved her fire, or heroically anticipates the doom incurred in breaking her oath. But there is no proof that Brynhild's love for Sigurd existed outside Scandinavian tradition: in *NL*, Brünhilt's tears at the wedding are poor evidence (see above), and she sheds none at his death.⁵ What of the oath? It may be significant that Brynhild's oath to marry a fearless, or the noblest man, or the man who performed certain deeds, is always sworn when, opposed to the whole idea of marriage, she is compelled to marry *someone*, by Odin (ch. 21), by her father Budli (ch. 31). In *NL*, however, Brünhilt who likewise has no intention of marrying, and has regularly vanquished all her suitors, is a sovereign princess. Her connection with Odin is probably non-existent (see above), she is unrelated to Budli (MHG Botelunc) and under no compulsion. And she swears no oath. Nor does she commit suicide.⁶ Some scholars⁷ hold, that although absent from *NL*, her suicide did belong to earlier German tradition, being an atonement for her lie (which is not recorded in German tradition!) about Sigurd-Sifrit's conduct⁸ when he slept

¹ *Märchen der Brüder Grimm*, ed. J. Lefftz, 1927, 81 ff.

² cf. p. xxxiv

³ The fact that Sigurd had been made to lose all memory of Brynhild and so deceived her unwittingly did not excuse him the consequences of the deception (cf. de Boor, *Attila*, 15 and n. 24). The potion of forgetfulness is a late invention dependent on the pre-betrothal motif.

⁴ In Norse literature there are indications that in Scandinavian antiquity a dead man's widow or betrothed might immolate herself at his funeral (see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, 1964, 272 ff., H. Shtelig, 'Traces of the custom of "Suttee" in Norway during the Viking Age', *Saga Book of the Viking Society*, VI, 1908-09, 180 ff.). The fact that the earlier custom was still remembered in the hey-day of Icelandic literature is not proof that Brynhild's suicide is itself early.

⁵ *NL* st. 1100 shows her indifference to the grief displayed by Kriemhilt.

⁶ Neither does *ÞSS* mention her suicide, though the A version states that she died soon after Sigurd (see Bertelsen II, 268).

⁷ e.g. Heusler, *NSL*, 10, Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 243

⁸ Despite Aslaug, his son by Brynhild, introduced to provide a link with the Norwegian royal house, and despite his behaviour in *ÞSS* very likely due to a later coarsening of taste, Sigurd's conduct was probably as described in *VS*, beyond reproach (cf. Heusler, *NSL*, 89 f.; Schneider I, 430, Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 242).

with her in her husband's place. But such a lie needs no atonement—it is a legitimate weapon in the pursuit of vengeance. And vengeance saves face! Her suicide would have been no 'hara-kiri' occasioned by dishonourable marriage, especially if she managed to doom her husband as well as Sigurd by tricking him with a lie into breaking his oath as blood-brother.¹ Brynhild had triumphed, thus blotting out her degradation—why then suicide?² Her heroic death, along with pre-betrothal and love motifs, may well be a late Icelandic innovation.³

Along with Brynhild's desire for vengeance, there appears another motive behind Sigurd's murder. In *VS* (ch. 32) Gunnar exclaims that on Sigurd's death 'the gold and all the power will be ours'. The theme of envy (and fear) of Sigurd's power, absent in *VS* apart from this instance appears in *PE*, *PSS*, *NL*, *HS*, and there is a hint of it in *SnE*.⁴ This was not a late addition to the dominant vengeance theme, which is only weakened by the secondary motive, though the latter may have been originally at least as important. The quarrel between the two princesses, present, though differing in detail, in all the full versions, always arises from rival claims to precedence based on the superiority of their respective husbands, and the insult offered to Brynhild may be seen as an excuse for action against a dangerous upstart whose influence threatened the royal power.⁵ To assume that Brynhild's deception was not part of the original poetic material is unwarranted, yet it is not impossible that the envy-fear theme is central and rests on some actual historical circumstance to which imaginative material was added.

Closely associated with the envy-fear theme is Hogni-Hagen. In

¹ The Eddaic *Brot* (st. 5 and 16) makes it likely that Gunnar was so tricked, despite the evidence of the (later) Eddaic *Sig. in skam.* where Gunnar avoids breaking his oath, for there is no hint of any betrayal on Sigurd's part that would justify him (cf. H. Kuhn, 'Brünhilds und Kriemhilds Tod', *ZfdA* LXXXII (1950), 191 ff.), but his oath was possibly a Scandinavian device, causally linking Gunnar's death with Sigurd's murder.

² Suicide in Germanic antiquity seems to have been considered more honourable than being executed, taken captive (after a battle) or, if a woman, violated (see G. Trathnigg, 'Selbstmord bei den Germanen', *ZfdA* LXXXII (1936), 99 ff.). These circumstances hardly apply to Brynhild.

³ J. de Vries believes that the late Icel. heroic elegies, including *Sig. in skam*, which gives the one full account of Brynhild's suicide (apart from the dependent version in *VS*), are translations of postulated eleventh- and twelfth-century Danish-German poems, see also W. Mohr, 'Jüngere Eddalieder südgermanischen Stoffes', *ZfdA* LXXXV (1938), 217 ff., also his 'Wortschatz und Motive der jüngeren Eddalieder', *ZfdA* LXXXVI (1939), 149 ff.

⁴ *Brot*, st. 8, 9, 10, *Sig. in skam*, st. 16; *PSS* ch. 388; *NL* st. 870, 993; *HS* st. 174 ff.; *SnE* ch. 50.

⁵ *NL* st. 110 shows Sifrit laying claim to Gunther's dominions at their first meeting.

VS, *PE*, *SnE* and *HS* he is Gunnar-Gunther's brother, in *PSS* Gunnar's half-brother whose father was an elf, and in *NL* and *Waltharius* his vassal and distant kinsman. What was his original status? His name does not alliterate with his brothers' and this speaks against an original brother relationship, which relationship in *HS* is surely a promotion from his *NL* status.¹ His supernatural antecedents in *PSS* are probably late,² but the half-brother relationship may be early Scandinavian, with subsequent promotion to brother: half-brother Hogni in *PSS* is Sigurd's murderer; in *PE*, *VS* and *SnE*³ where Hogni is a full brother, it is Guttorm who is the murderer, but in *SnE* Guttorm is a stepbrother, probably an echo of Hogni's former status. Was Hogni-Hagen a half-brother in the primitive tradition?⁴ Since he regularly appears as a kinsman of some sort, to deny him all kinship seems unwarranted; yet the Scandinavian texts show clear traces of his *NL* rôle as Gunnar's right-hand man and elder counsellor, an unusual capacity for a younger brother or half-brother, and it seems safest to assume that the North made a closer genealogical link and that here *NL* is nearest the original tradition.

The part played by Hagen in the murder of Sifrit in *NL* differs markedly from Hogni's in *VS*. In *NL* he sides with Brünhilt, insists on Sifrit's death, murders Sifrit in the forest—the younger brother having spoken in Sifrit's favour—and utters words showing that he was envious and afraid of Sifrit. In *VS* and *PE* Hogni opposes Brynhild and the murder; it is Brynhild who reveals she feared Sigurd's power (in one instance Gunnar is greedy for his wealth) and the youngest brother who murders Sigurd in his bed.⁵ A shift of balance has taken place. In Scandinavia the strengthening of Brynhild's rôle perhaps caused a transfer of Hogni's fear to her, his envy passing to Gunnar. But *NL* also knows Brünhilt as co-instigator and the blow aimed at her prestige and status during the quarrel scene, whether or not combined with the vengeance motive, might well have led her to consider Sigurd-Sifrit's death as politically expedient. Gunnar's greed may, however, be old. In *Waltharius* he behaves like a robber baron, Hagen first

¹ cf. King, *HS*, 83

² See de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, xiv. For the contrary opinion see e.g. Schneider I, 385 f., Panzer, 313 f.

³ *SnE*, 169, cf. also the late *Hyndlolióð*, st. 27 (Neckel, 288)

⁴ Baesecke *Vorgeschichte*, 242 f. answers negatively, as does King, *HS*, 83 and Wisniewski, *Niflungen*, 242 f.; in the affirmative, e.g. Schneider I, 192 f. Heusler, *NSL*, 53 believes Hagen was a retainer in the original Frankish Brünhilt Lay, and a half-brother of elfish origin in the original Frankish Lay of the Burgundians.

⁵ In *Gör*. II he is murdered in the forest.

opposing him,¹ though later saving him by decisive action. This is very like the pattern found in *VS* and *PE*. Hogni was certainly Gunnar's (reluctant) accomplice, and *Brot* st. 5, 7, 16 and *Hamðismál* st. 5, 6 speak of murderers or perjurers in the plural, *Hamðismál* st. 6 actually referring to Hogni as murderer.² The original Hogni-Hagen was perhaps a reluctant assassin whom German tradition presented as chief instigator and Kriemhilt's main antagonist, transferring to him Gunther's eagerness, fear and envy. These sentiments were in Scandinavia largely transferred to Brynhild, who may, however, have expressed them independently. The casting of the younger brother as murderer was surely an Icelandic innovation, designed to enable Gunnar and Hogni to avoid breaking their oaths to Sigurd,³ as was probably Sigurd's vengeance on the murderer⁴ and the indoor setting of the deed. In *NL* the body is laid at Kriemhilt's door, in *PSS* it is thrown on to the bed where she is sleeping, and a transfer of the actual murder from the forest to Gudrun's bed seems probable.⁵

Sigurd-Sifrit's youthful adventures are only loosely connected with the theme of his murder. They figure prominently in the major Scandinavian sources and in *HS*. *NL* mentions them indirectly: Hagen tells how Sifrit was asked by two brothers, the princes Nibelunc and Schilbunc, to divide their inheritance between them. He took in payment the sword Balmunc. Sifrit failed to complete the task and the brothers grew angry. Sifrit seized Balmunc, slew twelve giants, their friends, seven hundred warriors, then the brothers themselves, overpowered the dwarf Alberich and became master of Nibelungenland, the treasure and a cloak of invisibility. Later he slew a dragon, bathed in its blood and became largely invulnerable. Reference is later made to a gold wand, part of the treasure, that bestows unlimited power. In *VS*, *PE* and *SnE* the treasure is the dragon's and there is no independent treasure adventure. Who originally owned the treasure? None of the German sources associate it with the dragon (*HS* expressly

¹ In *VS* Part II he plays a not dissimilar rôle, first trying to dissuade Gunnar, but then finally helping him.

² A similar reference occurs in *Ghv.* st. 4 where it is copied from *Hm.* (see F. Jónsson, *Litt.* 1, 316, n. 1). The *Hm.* reference could directly reflect the contemporary German tradition, though the Scandinavian indoor slaying is linked to it.

³ See p. xxv, n. 4

⁴ Probably a development of the earlier theme found in *NL* where Hagen barely escapes with his life.

⁵ Unless it be argued that the *NL* version is the result of the fusion of two independent early accounts of the murder (cf. Heusler, *NSL*, 128). The prose section following *Brot* mentions a third version: Sigurd was slain while riding to the Assembly (*þing*)—this probably never existed, see Schneider I, 181.

denying the association in the case of Seyfrid's second dragon, an adventure which may partly reflect the original fight), while in *PSS* the connection is made only in retrospect. In German tradition it is mainly associated with dwarfs: in *NL* a dwarf guards it in the hollow mountain appropriate to dwarf ownership, in *HS* the setting is similar, and even in Scandinavian tradition the original owner was a dwarf, nor is it improbable that the *NL* princes were dwarfs later ennobled to suit courtly taste. In Scandinavian tradition both adventures have obviously coalesced, the original inheritors being equated with the dragon and Sigurd's fosterfather, the dwarf-smith,¹ consistently enough the dragon's brother and co-heir.² Unless there were *two* treasure adventures, the dragon's treasure being lost to German tradition,³ the original monster probably had no treasure.⁴

What, then, brought about the encounter between Sigurd-Sifrit and the dragon? According to *PSS* and *HS* it was the smith's wish to get rid of a foster-son whom he found troublesome, for whom—in contrast to *VS* and *PE*—he naturally forged no sword, though in *PSS* he attempts to appease Sigurd with the present of one (along with shield and armour) after the fight. But that the original heroic dragon-slayer should be suddenly set on by his dragon, of whose existence he previously knew nothing—as is the case in *PSS* and *HS*—seems unlikely. It would be more natural for the smith to think of the dragon, rather than his foster-son, as troublesome and to send the foster-son to destroy the menace,⁵ providing him with a suitable weapon, in short, the position in *VS* and *PE* less the treasure. Moreover, the *PSS* and *HS* conception of Sigurd-Sifrit as a clumsy or obnoxious lout accords ill with heroic tradition, and if it is a later development, then originally the dwarf-smith would have had no cause to send his foster-son to his doom.

But a difficulty remains: the sword. In *NL* the smith is suppressed and Sifrit's sword is part of the inheritance. In *Rosengarten* the sword is found at the scene of combat, presumably before, not after, the dragon's death, since there is no mention of any treasure from which it could come, and in the *HS* second dragon episode, the situation is similar. The finding of a weapon at the crucial moment is an ancient

¹ That the smith was a dwarf is clear from *PE*, prose introduction to *Rm.*, though *Fm.* st. 38. l. 2 refers to him as a giant (jötunn).

² See Schneider I, 171

³ See Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 222

⁴ See Schneider I, 151, Panzer, *Nibelungenlied*, 300

⁵ cf. King, *HS*, 49, 55

heroic motif¹ and it is scarcely credible that it should be a late addition. Thus the dragon slaying seems to have existed independently of the smith who may have been later grafted on to the Sigurd-Sifrit material as part of the Sigurd-Sifrit variant of the widespread² foundling hero theme, and given, though not in every version, the credit for forging the sword.

The effect of the dragon's blood differs in the two main traditions: in Scandinavia Sigurd comes to understand bird language,³ in Germany Sifrit becomes largely invulnerable. These themes, combined in *ÞSS*, have this in common, that in both the blood is in a sense prophylactic: Sigurd is saved from a specific danger, and Sifrit receives general protection. Further, *HS* tells how Seyfrid touched the dragon's molten scales with his finger, and it is tempting to regard this⁴ as a motif cognate with Sigurd's burnt finger of Northern tradition. But these links are tenuous and there is no real evidence to show what effect the blood originally had.⁵ To speculate whether the dragon adventure was originally Sigmund's, later transferred to Sigurd-Sifrit,⁶ and whether Sigmund's resistance to poison is the origin of Sifrit's invulnerability⁷ solves little. Nor is there evidence to decide whether the treasure was originally accursed or whether the gold wand is related to Andvari's gold ring.⁸ The cloak that renders Sifrit invisible when he helps Gunther to win Brünhilt replaces the older magic, the exchange of shapes.⁹

The other adventures attributed to Sigurd-Sifrit, rescuing a maiden

¹ Beowulf's slaying of Grendel's mother, a fiendish monster, provides a good example; Klaeber, l. 1557 ff.

² Witness characters as remote from each other as the biblical Moses, the classical Oedipus and the OE Scyld Scefing (Klaeber, l. 45 ff.)

³ de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, xxiii, believes that this motif comes from a Celtic source. Panzer, *Nibelungenlied*, 431, sees quite extensive Celtic elements in Sigurd's early history, but Schneider I, 432 is doubtful of this. See also J. de Vries, 'Über keltisch-germanische Beziehungen auf dem Gebiete der Heldensage', *Beiträge LXXV* (1953), 229 ff., his *Kelten und Germanen*, 1960, 130 ff., and his 'Germanic and Celtic heroic tradition', *Saga Book of the Viking Society*, XVI, 1962, 32 f.

⁴ As does Schneider I, 166

⁵ King, *HS*, 57 rather doubts whether it had any effect whatsoever. However, belief in the saving qualities of blood, human and otherwise, seems ancient and widespread. See P. Cassel, *Die Symbolik des Blutes und der arme Heinrich von Hartmann von Aue*, 1882.

⁶ For arguments *pro* and *contra* see Schneider I, 158 ff.

⁷ See Schneider I, 165

⁸ The emphasis laid on the ring also suggests a special property. Snorri (Jónsson, *SnE*, 165) mentions that it had the power to produce more gold; it is thus akin to Odin's ring Draupnir, also of dwarf origin, which could reproduce itself (*SnE*, 90, 158-60). Some such concept might lie behind the wand and Andvari's ring.

⁹ This seems generally agreed.

from a dragon (*HS*) and avenging his father (*VS*), are probably innovations in their respective traditions,¹ and as we have seen, Sigurd's preliminary encounter with Brynhild may be an Icelandic innovation.

What of Sigurd's divine descent and the appearance of Odin in his early adventures? Odin is clearly extraneous. He belongs rather to the Sigmund material,² and the father-son relationship between Sigurd-Sifrit and Sigmund, though known to German tradition, need not be original, for Sigmund is an independent hero³ and is known as such even outside Scandinavian tradition, witness *Beowulf* (ll.847 ff.), and the name Sinterfizzilo, equivalent to Sinfjotli, his close associate, appears in OHG documents.⁴ Moreover, the links between Sigmund and Sigurd are weak: Sigurd is born posthumously, and the broken blade inherited from Sigmund is clearly a substitute for an earlier weapon proper to his own exploits—it is only in German tradition that Sigmund survives his son and has a minor part in the Sifrit story itself. The connection between Sigurd and Odin is probably late Scandinavian, a result of the genealogical link made between Sigurd-Sifrit and Sigmund.

Sigurd-Sifrit's early adventures are clearly independent of the story of his death. They provide the victim of the murder plot with a suitable heroic background, but whether they were transferred to him from some other hero, or grew up around him, it is impossible to say. That a well-known character could attract to himself standard heroic adventures is shown by Theoderic the Goth, who as the legendary Dietrich von Bern, fights dragons and giants, and this is undoubtedly the case with Sigurd-Sifrit, who ultimately became a giant killer himself.⁵

Apart from the major variation in Gudrun-Kriemhilt's rôle, attention has been focused on differences in themes from the first half of the material. There are, however, two further variations in the second half that need comment.

The first concerns the fate of Gunnar-Gunther and Hogni-Hagen. In Scandinavian tradition it is Gunnar who, after ensuring Hogni's silence by getting him killed, refuses to betray to Atli the treasure's

¹ For the *HS* adventure see Schneider I, 121, and King, *HS*, 96; Sigurd's campaign to avenge his father is unknown outside Scandinavian tradition. Contamination with the Helgi Hundingsbani material may have caused a transfer of the adventure from Helgi to Sigurd, see below, p. xxxvi, n. 7.

² See p. xxxv below

³ A late example of two independent heroes becoming linked genealogically is found in the grandfather-grandson relationship of Wolfdietrich and Dietrich von Bern, and in *VS* Gudrun appears as the mother of Svanhild.

⁴ See Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 278

⁵ In *HS*

whereabouts, whereas in *NL* their rôles are reversed. But here Kriemhilt is the enemy, and it is her new rôle that brought about the change in theirs, for Hagen, as Sifrit's murderer, is Kriemhilt's natural antagonist, and it is he who must defy and thwart her at the last. Here, too, *VS* is nearer the original plot.

The second concerns Gudrun-Kriemhilt's fate: in *NL* (and in *ÞSS*) she is put to the sword, in Scandinavian tradition she unsuccessfully attempts suicide by drowning. Her death seems a fitting conclusion to either of her rôles, for in both, unlike Brynhild, she behaves in a monstrous fashion.

But her original death was not by drowning. Her unsuccessful attempt at suicide by that method is a literary device that brings her to King Jonakr by whom she has sons who link her more closely with the Ermanaric (Jormunrek) cycle¹—to which she is already linked through being equated with Svanhild's mother. She may originally have died in the flames of Atli's hall—in *NL* she also fires a hall, though here, true to her new rôle, her action is directed against her brothers.

A third tradition, found in the Hven Chronicle tells how Gudrun-Kriemhilt was later starved to death by Hogni's son, begotten after Hogni had been mortally wounded. In *ÞSS* it is Attila who starves, while in the Faroese *Högni*,² both Atli and Gudrun-Kriemhilt meet their death in this way.

Hogni's son was clearly invented as an instrument of vengeance—but against whom? Any version in which Hogni-Hagen outlives Gunnar-Gunther must surely portray Kriemhilt in her changed rôle as her brothers' enemy. Thus she, not Attila must have been the original object of vengeance. In the *ÞSS*, where Grimhild is slain by Thidrek, Hogni's son was included, but his vengeance had to be directed against Attila, and in *Högni* the two acts of vengeance were combined.³

There remains the question of variations in the characters' names. In some instances they result from normal phonological development in the respective languages, e.g. Atli: Etsel, but this is not so in the case of Sigurd-Sifrit, where the former is equivalent to a German

¹ H. Kuhn, 'Brünhilds und Kriemhilds Tod', *ZfDA* LXXXII (1950), 194 f. believes that the link between Gudrun-Kriemhild and the Ermanaric cycle was a German innovation and that there must have been an early form of the legend in which Kriemhild did not die.

² Hogni's son (H)Niftung who helps Gudrun to murder Atli in *VS* and *Am*. is probably a faint echo of this tradition.

³ H. de Boor, *Die Färöischen Lieder des Nibelungenzyklus*, 1918, 209 ff. reaches the same conclusion on different grounds. Wisniewski, *Niflungen*, 200 f. argues that the original object of the son's vengeance was Attila.

Sigwart and the latter a contraction of *Sigfrit*, while Gudrun and Kriemhilt are different names altogether, and the root syllable of the latter appears in various forms. How important are these differences? Kralik sees in them support for his theories.¹ It is doubtful whether they are so significant. The variations may be fortuitous and of no greater importance than the substitution in *ÞSS* of the name Mimir for Regin, and of Regin for Fafnir.

This examination of the major themes reveals that *VS* enshrines inherited traditions with a long history and a complex and regrettably obscure development. Yet although the main stories involved are not native to Scandinavia, there can be little doubt that Scandinavia was creative as well as receptive. Not everything came from or via Germany, and some of the most effective scenes in *VS* may well owe their existence to the fertility of imagination which created native Norse poetry and saga, and made Norse literature unique in mediaeval Europe.

5 *History, myth and fairytale*

It has long been an axiom that all Germanic heroic poetry derives from some historical event² and the names Gjuki-Gibich, Guttorm-Giselhêr-Gernôt and Gunnar-Gunther have historical counterparts in Gibica, Gislaharius and Gundaharius, members of the Burgundian royal house.³ The destruction of Gunnar, Hogni and their followers by Atli echoes the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom by the Huns (not led by Attila) in 437, linked to an imaginative account of Attila's death in 451: he was found dead at the side of his Germanic concubine, Ildico, probably Hildico, a diminutive of Hild, whence is said to derive Kriemhilt. Germanic imagination saw his death as an act of vengeance, identified Hildico as Gunnar's sister and avenger, and thus turned two unconnected events into the story of a family feud.⁴

But what historical personage is reflected in Sigurd-Sifrit? The question has been variously answered. He has been sought for in the

¹ See p. xviii and Kralik, *op. cit.* 444 ff.

² cf. H. de Boor, 'Hat Siegfried gelebt?', *Beiträge LXIII* (1939), 63, and Wais, *Frühe Epik*, 42.

³ These names occur in the *Lex Burgundionum* of the early sixth century (L. R. de Salis in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges* I, ii, 1), and the name Gundicarius (Gundaharius) occurs in other historical documents.

⁴ cf. Heusler, *NSL*, 25, Schneider I, 201

Merovingian period and identified as Sigibert,¹ the ruler of Austrasia who was murdered in 575. He has been equated with the Ostrogoth Araja,² with the German national hero Arminius³ who defeated the Roman Varus in A.D. 9, and with Victorinus,⁴ a Christian Roman officer, martyred at Birten, c. 286. H. de Boor argues for an historical basis not far removed from the power-political theme of the extant texts (see p. xxv): a noble Frankish exile marries into the Burgundian royal house,⁵ becomes too powerful and is assassinated. His cogent arguments are based on the intermingling of Frankish and Burgundian names in the later Burgundian dynasty. F. Panzer⁶ and others held that Sigurd-Sifrit was not an historical personage but a fairytale character, recast in the heroic mould, while earlier a mythical origin for the Sigurd-Sifrit material had been postulated.⁷ The Arminius theory and the idea of an ultimate origin in myth have recently been revived. O. Höfler⁸ sees Sigurd-Sifrit's victory over the dragon as Arminius's victory over the Romans transferred to a mythical plane. In the various references of the extant texts to Sigurd-Sifrit in terms of a stag or beast he sees, not a literary motif, but a link with the animal symbolism and cultic ritual of Arminius's tribe, the Cheruski, a name deriving from Germanic *herut-, 'stag'. One such instance seems to be the name 'Hind Fell' (*Hindarfjall*) where Sigurd awakens Brynhild, an episode

¹ Early by L. Ernst, *Über die Entstehung der mittelalterlichen Gedichte, welche die deutsche Heldensage behandeln*, 1839, and most recently by Hugo Kuhn in a study 'Brünhild und das Kriemhild-Lied', which precedes the main argument in Wais, *Frühe Epik*. The most thorough study on these lines is G. Schütte, *Sigfrid und Brünhild. Ein als Mythos verkannter historischer Roman aus der Merovingenzeit*, 1935.

² Suggested by R. Huss, 'Die Senna der Königinnen in der Völsungensage und der Nibelungensage', *Beiträge XLVII* (1923), 506 f., and elaborated by M. Lintzel, *Der historische Kern der Sigfridsage*, 1935.

³ e.g. G. Vigfusson and G. York Powell, *Grimm Centenary. Sigfred-Arminius and other papers*, 1886; A. Beneke, *Siegfried ist Armin!*, 1911.

⁴ A. Crüger, *Der Ursprung des Nibelungenliedes*, 1841.

⁵ See de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*, viii and de Boor, 'Hat Siegfried gelebt?', *Beiträge LXIII* (1939), 250 f.—revolutionary in the assumption that the Burgundian milieu is an integral element in the Sifrit story, and not a later addition.

⁶ In a series of studies extending from 1910 (*Studien zur germanischen Sagensgeschichte*) to 1955 (*Das Nibelungenlied. Entstehung und Gestalt*). Cf. also F. Schröder, *Nibelungenstudien*, 1921.

⁷ cf. e.g. Karl Steiger, *Die verschiedenen Gestaltungen der Siegfriedsage in der germanischen Literatur*, 1873, 33: Siegfried is seen as the redeeming god who in spring slays the winter dragon, frees the gold of the sun, and awakens to life sleeping nature with his sword, a sunbeam. Steiger, with others, associates Sigurd-Sifrit with the Norse god, Freyr (op. cit. 35), K. Lachmann and others with Baldr (cf. K. Lachmann, 'Kritik der Sage von den Nibelungen', *Rheinisches Museum III* (1832), 435 ff.).

⁸ O. Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik*, 1961, esp. 50 ff.

which, if the name is indeed a genuine survival from ancient times before the separation of the Scandinavian and German traditions, may have its roots in the erotic element of the cultic stag-ritual: the stag seeks its hind. In this case, the German Sifrit may have had a similar adventure (see above p. xxiii). F. R. Schröder,¹ admitting fairytale influence and the presence of elements derived probably from more than one historical personage, lays stress on the mythical basis of the material. His ideas in the last analysis are based on C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes (also drawn on by O. Höfler). Behind Sigurd-Sifrit Schröder sees the Divine Son in various rôles: his death parallels that of the vegetation god; his slaying of the dragon parallels the destruction of primaeval chaos by the Divine Son, cf. Indra's similar victory; Sigurd and Brynhild are, he postulates, akin to Indra and Indrani, Freyr and Freyja, pairs which each represent an originally single hermaphrodite divinity, son of Sky God and Earth Goddess, hermaphrodite through acquiring the functions of both parents. This field of inquiry is certainly fruitful, but the derivation of literary motifs from archetypes does not necessarily mean that the archetypes concerned crystallised into literary form at the same time and place or round the same hero. Moreover the story of the historical Sigurd-Sifrit's murder, influenced by the archetypal pattern, could have drawn to itself the dragon slaying and later the 'sleeping maiden' theme.

It seems very probable, as suggested by F. R. Schröder and O. Höfler, that the Sigurd-Sifrit material is a blend of myth, history, fairytale and cultic ritual, though the extant texts also reveal the hand of the creative literary artist.

Is the same true of the early chapters of *VS*, introductory to the Sigurd material? Sigmund may be a reflection of the Burgundian king Sigismund who reigned from 516 to 523 and who likewise led the life of a fugitive, though the Sigmund story in *VS* parallels the Fall of the Burgundians and seems modelled on it.² In both a king sends a treacherous invitation to his brothers-in-law who are warned by their sister, the king's unloving wife, but are overpowered, captured and given over to a cruel death. The sister takes vengeance on her husband: their two sons are slain³ and the hall goes up in

¹ Franz Rolf Schröder, 'Mythos und Heldensage', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* XXXVI (1955), 1 ff.

² Karl Müllenhof, 'Die alte Dichtung von den Nibelungen, I. Von Sigfrids Ahnen', *ZfdA* XXIII (1879), 146 f. believed that the influence was in the reverse direction.

³ Signy's two sons by Siggeir are *twice* slain, Sigmund is *twice* condemned to death before securing vengeance (see Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 282). Further 'doublets' are suspected by Wais, *Frühe Epik.* 118 f.

flames.¹ Literary influence is unmistakable. Obvious fairytale elements² are the shape-changing episodes, the leaf that restores Sinfjotli, the imperviousness to poison, the tests to which Signy subjects her children,³ the kneading in of the serpent, the disappearance of Sinfjotli's body in Odin's boat.

Sigmund's father, Volsung, has no historical counterpart. Müllenhof declared the name related to German 'wählen', i.e. 'choose',⁴ Volsung, Odin's 'chosen hero' being destined to destroy Siggeir's family which, though also descended from Odin, had become degenerate. This etymology is not impossible, but the link between Siggeir and Odin lacks foundation. A sounder link is that postulated⁵ between the names Volsung and Volsi which latter appears in *Völsa þáttr*⁶ as the name of a phallic fetish, and itself probably means 'phallus'.⁷ There are, in fact, definite traces of a fertility cult in the Volsung-Sigmund material,⁸ e.g. the apple sent to Rerir, the tree in Volsung's hall,⁹ the incest motif,¹⁰ the werewolf episode, and it is here that the basic substance of the Volsung-Sigmund story must be sought. Volsi was probably a lesser deity closely associated with Odin in his fertility aspect, or else an hypostasis¹¹ of that God. That Odin should appear instead of Volsi in *VS* as founder of the Volsung line is thus understandable—less understandable is the appearance of Volsung as Odin's great-grandson. The name Volsung is a patronymic, as is Wælsing in *Beowulf*, but Wælsing, i.e. son of Wæls (Volsi), is Sigmund himself.¹² It would thus seem that the Sigi and Rerir of *VS* are later interlopers and that Volsi-Odin's son

¹ See Schneider I, 148; Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 282; Wais, *Frühe Epik*, 119 f. who also sees parallels between the Volsung-Sigmund story and earlier hypothetical stages of the Burgundian-Kriemhilt-Attila material.

² See Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 282.

³ Perhaps a reflection of ancient initiation rites, see Baesecke, *ibid.*

⁴ A. Heusler (*Hoops IV*, 444) and H. Kuhn (*AfdA LVI* (1937), 156) similarly relate the name to Gothic *walis*, 'chosen', from the same root.

⁵ By F. R. Schröder, 'Germanische Urmythen', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft XXXV* (1938), 224 f. See also de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion*, II, 207 f.

⁶ In *Flateyjarbók*, II, 331 ff.

⁷ The name is related to Icelandic *völr*, Gothic *walus*, 'staff', see F. R. Schröder, *op.cit.* 222 f.

⁸ See de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 455

⁹ That the tree was connected with the idea of fertility was early suspected by Bugge, *Völs*. 193, and in 'Iduns Æbler', 5 f.; see also p. 4, n. 1.

¹⁰ This motif has been regarded as an example of Celtic influence (see Baesecke, *Vorgeschichte*, 282), though F. R. Schröder argues that it is an element proper to the fertility myth background (see F. R. Schröder, *op. cit.* 227 f., 233). The withdrawal of the sword from the tree and the disappearance of Sinfjotli's body in Odin's boat are certainly reminiscent of the Celtic legend of Arthur (Baesecke, *op. cit.* 283 ff., cf. Schneider I, 161 ff.).

¹¹ See F. R. Schröder, *op. cit.* 223 ff.

¹² *Beowulf*, ll. 877-97

was originally Sigmund,¹ the patronymic being later regarded in Scandinavian tradition as the name of a distinct person.

The Volsung-Sigmund material would therefore seem to draw on sources akin to those of the Sigurd story proper.

6 *The immediate literary sources of VS and the date and place of its compilation*

As mentioned earlier, *VS* is largely a prose version of certain Eddaic lays preserved in the Codex Regius (*CR*).² Nothing in *PE* answers to *VS* ch. 24–31 (inclusive), for this section preserves in prose form the poems of the lost leaves of *CR*. Some scholars held that the whole section derives from lays,³ others early denied this for ch. 24 and 25,⁴ while P. Wieselgren sought to demonstrate⁵ that not only did these two chapters never exist in lay form, being largely interpolative (along, as he thinks, with ch. 22), but that even ch. 26, 27 and 28 did not necessarily derive from lays⁶ and also showed evidence of the later redactor. The first section of *VS* that derives from Eddaic sources is Sigmund's marriage to Borghild and the adventures of their son Helgi.⁷ All the preceding narrative⁸ and that following which had no equivalent in *PE* (excluding ch. 23, but including certain elements in ch. 24–31) derive from a no longer extant *Sigurðar saga*,⁹ dating from c. 1200,

¹ F. R. Schröder, op. cit. 225. Þórólfsson, *Rímur*, argues that the Breði episode was of late origin, specially written in explanation of the word *breðafönn*, a common enough thirteenth-century procedure. S. Bugge, 'Bidrag til den germanske Heltedigtning', *Arkiv* xiii (nyföljð 1901), 41 ff., sees in it a reflection of an eighth-century Frankish historian's ('Fredegar's') version of the origin of the Langobards.

² Appendix C shows the general correspondence between saga and Edda.

³ e.g. A. Heusler, 'Lieder der Lücke', 31 ff.

⁴ e.g. W. Grimm, *Die deutsche Heldensage*, 4th ed. 1957, 398

⁵ Wieselgren, *Quellenstudien*, II, 161 ff., 220; III, 351

⁶ There has been much speculation as to precisely what the lost leaves of the Codex contained, see e.g. Heusler, 'Lieder der Lücke'. If Wieselgren is correct, then Heusler's hypothesis of a German 'falcon lay' as the source of the dream motif in ch. 26 is untenable. F. Panzer held that the motif was borrowed from *NL* itself (see F. Panzer, 'Nibelungische Ketzereien', *Beiträge LXXV* (1953), 261 f.).

⁷ The Helgi story was originally independent of *VS* and Poetic Edda; Sigmund was turned into Helgi's father only at a later date.

⁸ Þórólfsson, *Rímur*, 301, argues that the first eight chapters of *VS* did not exist previously in any one single source.

⁹ See de Vries, *Altnord. Lit.* II, 207 f.; F. Jónsson, *Litt.* II, 837 f.; Wieselgren, II, 221. The *Sigurðar saga* has also been thought the source of the Sigurd story in Snorri's Prose Edda, *Norna-Gests Þáttur* and the prose passages in the Poetic Edda, cf. Jónsson, *Litt.* II, 838, and it may have been the main recipient of the last wave of German influence on the Scandinavian tradition, see Wieselgren, III, 348, and cf. p. xvii, n. 1.

which may itself draw on earlier lays and in which a lesser or greater number of verses appeared.¹

An extant saga on which *VS* draws is *PSS*. Three short passages may derive from it: (a) *VS* ch. 32: and had I known . . . wild boar (cf. Bertelsen, II 266, ll.17-24); (b) *VS* ch. 34: Now everyone . . . world endured (cf. Bertelsen, II 268, ll.9-17); (c) *VS* ch. 35: there's no hiding the fact . . . profit by this (cf. Bertelsen, II 281, ll.9-14). But such derivation is doubtful: it is hard to see why these stray passages should have been taken over and P. Wieselgren suggests² that they derive on both sides from the *Sigurðar saga*.³ There is, however, no doubt⁴ that Sigurd's description, *VS* ch. 23, is borrowed from *PSS* ch. 291.⁵

It would thus seem that *VS* must have been compiled after *PSS*, which dates from 1250-60.⁶ In support of this it has been argued that only the example of *PSS*, compiled at the behest of Hakon Hakonarson, king of Norway (1217-63) could have supplied an incentive for the compilation of *VS* which also provides, in the person of Odin, divine descent for Hakon whose ancestor, Ragnar Lodbrok, in the saga bearing his name, marries Aslaug, Sigurd's daughter by Brynhild (and *VS* is not extant except as a 'prelude' to *Ragnars saga*). Moreover, it is argued, *VS* is based on *CR* which is usually assigned a date somewhat later than *PSS*.⁷

These arguments are not convincing. Firstly, P. Wieselgren argues⁸ that ch. 23 is the work of the interpolator; if so, the date of *PSS* is not significant. Secondly, that an incentive should have been necessary for expanding the *Sigurðar saga* with Eddaic material is hard to see. Thirdly, it seems likely that Aslaug did not appear in the original *VS* but was deliberately introduced to link *VS* with *Ragnars*

¹ Sometimes de Vries actually refers to the *Sigurðar saga* as a 'book of lays' ('Liederbuch', e.g. *Alt nord. Lit.* II, 207, 210) and in fact many, if not all, lays may have needed an accompanying prose narrative (see F. Genzmer, 'Vorzeitssaga und Heldenlied', *Kluckhohn-Schneider Festschrift*, 1948, 1-31, and H. Kuhn, 'Heldensage vor und ausserhalb der Dichtung', *Genzmer Festschrift*, 1952, 262-78).

² Op. cit. III, 260 f.

³ He believes that other passages in Part II also derive from the *Sigurðar saga* (op. cit. III, 246 ff.), this would then have included a version of the Atli material. Wisniewski, *Niflungen*, 267 ff., 284, argues that certain passages in part II which have no equivalent in *PE* derive from a postulated independent version of the Atli material, drawn on in part by *Am.* itself, and by a postulated second source of *PSS*.

⁴ cf. Jónsson, *Litt.* II, 836; de Vries, *Alt nord. Lit.* II, 438

⁵ Bertelsen I, 344-7

⁶ See p. x, n. 5

⁷ See p. ix

⁸ Op. cit. II, 220; III, 241

saga.¹ Lastly, not *CR* itself, but an earlier no longer extant MS of the relevant Eddaic lays was very likely² the compiler's source. All that can be said with any certainty is that *VS* was written between *c.* 1200 and *c.* 1270, that it was linked to *Ragnars saga*, and that a redactor³ interpolated certain material.

There are certain Norwegian elements amidst the predominantly Icelandic text of our oldest MS of *VS* which have been thought to indicate that a Norwegian exemplar was used by an Icelandic scribe, and M. Olsen suggested that *VS* might have originally been Norwegian, though he admitted that the Norwegian elements could have crept in through the copying of an Icelandic MS by Norwegian scribes.⁴ There seems little need to postulate an origin other than Icelandic.

7 *The Manuscripts*

There is only one vellum MS extant, dating from *c.* 1400: Ny kgl. Saml. 1824 b 4to in the Royal Library, Copenhagen (*V*). There is also a number of paper MSS, dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, which have no independent value since they ultimately derive from *V*. This is shown by the fact that they not only in general follow *V* closely, but that for some of the passages where *V* is now illegible or only partially legible, they substitute a form of words that could only be due to the failure of an early copyist to read those selfsame passages. There are also differences between *CR* and *V* where the paper MSS agree with *V*.

The condition of *V* has deteriorated since M. Olsen's excellent diplomatic edition (= *Ol*). His readings for words then legible but now illegible are adopted in this edition, the illegibility being recorded in the textual notes. Some pages have suffered badly, the worst being folio 1r which Olsen found illegible in parts, and which is now totally undecipherable. Examination under ultra-violet light and infra-red photography have proved unavailing.

The text in this edition is in normalised spelling. Emendations,

¹ See Wieselgren, *op. cit.* III, 351. M. Olsen, *ed.* lxxxii f. holds that *VS* never existed independently but was specially compiled as an introduction to it.

² There are a number of factors that speak against *CR* having been his direct source, e.g. *VS* st. 11 gives in full *Sd.* st. 8, defective in *CR*, and supplements (in prose) the likewise defective *Fm.* st. 3 and 18.

³ The two sagas were joined before this interpolator set to work, see Wieselgren, *op. cit.* III, 351 f.

⁴ See M. Olsen, *ed.* lxxvii ff. D. A. Seip, 'Har Nordmenn skrevet opp Edda-Diktningen', *Maal og Minne*, 1951, 3-33 holds that MS Ny kgl. Saml. 1824 b probably derives from an Icelandic exemplar, but that the original work may still have been Norwegian.

other than those of minor scribal vagaries, are indicated in the textual notes, as are the more important differences in Bugge's text (*B*).

EDITIONS OF VOLSUNGA SAGA

Völsunga saga has previously been edited by :

- E. J. Björner (*Nordiska kämpadater XI*), Stockholm 1737
 F. H. von der Hagen (*Altnordische Sagen und Lieder*), Breslau 1814
 C. C. Rafn (*Fornaldarsögur Norðlanda I*) Copenhagen 1829
 S. Bugge (*Norrøne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold II*), Christiania 1865
 E. Wilken (*Die prosaische Edda im Auszuge nebst Völsungasaga und Nornagestsþátr*), Paderborn 1877, 2nd ed. Paderborn 1912
 W. Ranisch (following Bugge's text), Berlin 1891, 2nd ed. Berlin 1908
 T. Hannaas (including a modern Norwegian translation), Christiania 1907
 M. Olsen (Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur) 1906-8
 Copenhagen
 Guðni Jónsson, Reykjavík, 1943-44
 Guðni Jónsson (*Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda I*), Reykjavík 1950

Previous English Translations of Völsunga saga

There have been two, the first by William Morris and Eiríkr Magnússon first published in London in 1870 and recently reissued by Collier Books, New York, with an introduction by R. W. Gutman; the second by M. Schlauch published in 1930 (2nd edition 1949).

Professor Schlauch criticises the heavily archaistic style of the Morris-Magnússon translation, but none the less aims at a somewhat archaic style on the grounds that 'even to the Sagaman it was a tale of remote, ancient days of gods and demigods and half mythical kings.' It was. But there can be little doubt that the legendary heroes were as real to the people of the mediaeval North as those of the more immediate past, and the compiler of *Völsunga saga* aims at presenting his poetic material in straightforward saga style and language. The present translation attempts to provide an English version as free as possible from unnecessary archaisms. In the translation of the verses no sort of claim is made for any close approximation to the original alliterative metres or to the poetic qualities of the Icelandic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| AfdA | Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum |
| Akv. | Atlakviða (see PE) |
| Am. | Atlamál (see PE) |
| Arkiv | Arkiv för nordisk filologi |
| Askeberg | Fritz Askeberg, <i>Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid</i> , 1944 |
| Baesecke,
Vorgeschichte | G. Baesecke, <i>Vor- und Frühgeschichte des deutschen Schrifttums</i> , I: <i>Vorgeschichte</i> , 1940 |
| Bertelsen | Piðriks saga af Bern (S.T.U.A.G.N.L.), two vols, 1905-11 |
| R. C. Boer | <i>Die Edda, mit historisch-kritischem Kommentar</i> , ed. R. C. Boer, two vols, 1922 |
| de Boor, <i>Attila</i> | H. de Boor, <i>Das Attilabild in Geschichte, Legende und heroischer Dichtung</i> , 1932 |
| de Boor, <i>Lit.</i> | H. de Boor, <i>Geschichte der deutschen Literatur</i> von H. de Boor und R. Newald, 1949 (the volumes dealing with the mediaeval period are by de Boor) |
| de Boor,
<i>Nibelungenlied</i> | <i>Das Nibelungenlied nach der Ausgabe von K. Bartsch</i> , ed. H. de Boor, 13th ed., 1956 |
| Bugge, 'Iduns
Æbler' | S. Bugge, 'Iduns Æbler', <i>Arkiv för nordisk filologi</i> , V (1889), 5 ff. |
| Brot (also Br.) | Brot af Sigurðarkviðu (see PE) |
| Bugge, <i>Völs.</i> | <i>Völsunga saga (Norrøne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold)</i> , ed. S. Bugge, 1864 |
| Cleasby-Vigfusson | R. Cleasby and G. Vigfusson, <i>An Icelandic-English Dictionary</i> , 1874 |
| CR | Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda |
| Detter-Heinzel | <i>Sæmundar Edda mit einem Anhang</i> , ed. F. Detter and R. Heinzel, two vols, 1903 |
| Dr. | Dráp Niflunga (see PE) |
| Ellis | H. R. Ellis, <i>The Road to Hel</i> , 1943 |
| Fas. | <i>Völsunga saga (Fornaldar sögur Norðrlanda I)</i> ed. C. C. Rafn, 1829 |
| Flateyjarbók | <i>Flateyjarbók</i> , ed. G. Vigfusson and C. R. Unger, 3 vols, 1860-8 |
| Fm. | Fáfnismál (see PE) |
| Fritzner, <i>Ordbog</i> | J. Fritzner, <i>Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog</i> , 1883-96 |
| Grimm | <i>Grimm's Teutonic Mythology</i> translated by J. S. Stallybrass, 1888 |
| Ghw. | Guðrúnarhvot (see PE) |
| Gðr. II | Guðrúnarkviða II (see PE) |

- Grp.* Gripisspá (see *PE*)
- Heusler, *Lieder der Lücke* A. Heusler, 'Die Lieder der Lücke im Codex Regius der Edda', *Germanistische Abhandlungen*, Hermann Paul zum 17. März 1902 dargebracht
- Heusler, *NSL* A. Heusler, *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied*, 5th ed., 1955
- HH I* Helgakviða Hundingsbana I (see *PE*)
- Hm.* Hamðismál (see *PE*)
- Hoops *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. J. Hoops, 4 vols, 1911-19
- HS* Das Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid (see King)
- Hven. 'Die Hvenische Chronik', ed. O. L. Jiriczek, in *Acta Germanica*, Bd. II, Heft 2, 1892
- Jónsson, *SnE* *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, 1935
- F. Jónsson, *Litt.* F. Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*, 3 vols, 1920-4
- King, *HS* *Das Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid*, ed. K. C. King, 1958
- Klaeber *Beowulf*, ed. Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed., 1941
- MHG* Middle High German
- NL* Das Nibelungenlied (the references are to de Boor's edition, see de Boor, *Nibelungenlied*)
- Neckel *Edda, Die Lieder des Codex Regius . . .* 2nd ed. G. Neckel 1927 (3rd ed. 1936, 4th ed. revised by H. Kuhn, 1962), Old English
- OE* Old English
- OHG* Old High German
- M. Olsen, ed. *Völsunga saga . . .* (S.T.U.A.G.N.L.), ed. M. Olsen, 1906-8
- Panzer, *Nibelungenlied* Fr. Panzer, *Das Nibelungenlied : Entstehung und Gestalt*, 1955
- PE* The Poetic Edda (where belong *Akv.*, *Am.*, *Br.*, *Dr.*, *Fm.*, *Ghv.*, *Gðr.* II, *Grp.*, *HH I*, *Hm.*, *Rm.*, *Sd.*, *Sf.*, *Sg.*). References are to Neckel's edition (see Neckel)
- PBB* *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, begründet von Wilhelm Braune, Hermann Paul, Eduard Sievers, 1874
- Rm.* Reginsmál (see *PE*)
- Schneider H. Schneider, *Germanische Heldensage*, 3 vols (*Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*), 1928-34 (Vol. I, 2nd ed., with bibliography by R. Wisniewski, 1962)
- Sd.* Sigrdrífumál (see *PE*)
- Sf.* Frá dauða Sinfjötla (see *PE*)
- Sg.* (also *Sig.* Sigurðarkviða in skamma (see *PE*)
in skam.)
- SnE* Snorra Edda (see Jónsson, *SnE*)

- S.T.U.A.G.N.L. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur
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 VS Völsunga saga
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Rímur 9), 1934
 ÞSS Þiðriks saga (the references are to Bertelsen's edition
 see Bertelsen)

ICELANDIC TEXT
AND
ENGLISH TRANSLATION

VOLSRUNGA SAGA

I

Hér hefr upp ok segir frá þeim manni, er Sigi er nefndr, ok kallaðr at hétu sonr Óðins.¹ Annarr maðr er nefndr til sögunnar er Skaði² hét. Hann var ríkr ok mikill fyrir sér, en þó var Sigi þeira inn ríkari ok ættstærri at því er menn mæltu í þann tíma.

Skaði átti þræl þann er nokkut verðr at geta við söguna. Hann hét Breði. Hann er fróðr við þat er hann skyldi at hafask. Hann hafði íþróttir ok atgervi jafnframt hinum er meira þóttu verðir, eða umfram nokkura.

Þat er at segja eitthvert sinn at Sigi ferr á dýraveiði, ok með honum þrællinn, ok veiða dýr um daginn allt til aptans. En er þeir bera saman veiði sína um aptaninn, þá hafði Breði veitt miklu fleira^a ok meira en Sigi, hvat honum líkaði stórilla, ok segir at sik undri at einn þræll skuli sik yfirbuga í dýraveiði, hleypr því at honum ok drepr hann; dysjar síðan líkit í snjófönn.

Nú ferr hann heim um kveldit, ok segir at Breði hafi riðit frá honum á skóginn,—‘ok var hann senn ór augliti mér, ok veit ek ekki til hans.’ Skaði grunar sögn Siga ok getr at vera munu svik hans, ok mun Sigi hafa drepit hann; fær menn^b til at leita hans, ok lýkr svá leitinni, at þeir fundu hann í skafli einum, ok mælti Skaði at þann skafli skyldi kalla Breðafönn heðan af, ok hafa menn nú þat eptir síðan ok kalla svá hverja fönn er mikil er. Þá kemr upp at Sigi hefir drepit þrællinn ok myrðan.³ Þá kalla þeir hann varg í véum,⁴ ok má hann nú eigi heima vera með feðr sínum.

^a *Ol found fol. 1r difficult to read, especially the last nine lines (Nú ferr begins fol. 1v). Apart from the words ok meira, B's conjecture, the text from fleira to snjófönn is that of the paper MSS. Fol. 1r is now completely undecipherable.*

^b *thus Ol, mann V*

¹ Volsung, the grandfather of Sigurd and eponymous ancestor of the Volsungs is the grandson of this Sigi. Various royal houses, e.g. the legendary skjöldungar (see Jónsson, *SnE*, Prologus ch. 11) and the historic Anglo-Saxon dynasties (see Grimm, *IV*, 1709 ff.) were credited with or claimed descent from Odin (see also de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* II, 85), though the connection between Odin and the Volsungs may have a significance of its own, see Introduction pp. xxxv f.

² For Skaði and his thrall Breði see Introduction p. xxxvi, n. 1

³ *myrða*: to commit ‘first-degree’ murder and by extension: to conceal the body, see Glossary under *morð*.

THE SAGA OF THE VOLSUNGS

I

The tale begins here and tells of a man called Sigi who was said to be the son of Odin.¹ Another man features in the story, and his name was Skadi.² He was powerful and important, but, even so, Sigi was the more powerful of the two, and the higher born, as people said at that time.

Skadi had a thrall who must be mentioned in the story. His name was Bredi. He was most efficient in the duties he was given to perform. In his accomplishments and ability he was as good as people who counted for more than he did, and better than some.

You must now hear how Sigi once went out after deer with this serf, and they hunted on through the day into the late afternoon. When they then brought together the deer they had slain, Bredi had accounted for both more and larger than Sigi had, and he took this very badly indeed. He said he was astonished that a serf should be better at hunting deer than he was, and with that he attacked and killed him, afterwards burying the body in a snow-drift.

That evening he returned home and said that Bredi had ridden off into the woods: 'I soon lost sight of him, and I don't know what's become of him.' Skadi was suspicious of Sigi's story and guessed there had probably been foul play and that Sigi had really killed him. He got together a party to search for him, and their search ended with their finding him in the snow-drift. Skadi said he would call it 'Bredi's Drift' from then on, and people have kept to this ever since, and every big drift is called by that name. It was then quite clear that Sigi had murdered the serf and hidden his body.³ He was forthwith declared an outlaw,⁴ and so could not remain at home with his father.

⁴ Literally 'a wolf in holy places', an expression normally used of a man who slays another in a hallowed place or sanctuary (e.g. at an assembly), and is forthwith declared a 'wolf', i.e. an outlaw. *Vargr* without further qualification is also used in the general sense of 'outlaw' and is equivalent to the term *skógarmaðr* (i.e. 'wood-man'), the outcast from society who roams the forests, the like of wolves, and with them to be hunted down and slain.

Óðinn fylgir honum nú af landi brott, svá langa leið at stóru bar, ok eigi létti hann fyrr en hann kom honum til herskipa. Nú tekr Sigi at leggjask í hernað með þat lið er faðir hans fekk honum áðr þeir skilðu, ok varð hann sigrsæll í hernaðinum. Ok svá kemr hans máli at hann fekk herjat sér land ok ríki um síðir. Ok því næst fekk hann sér gøfugt kvánfang, ok gerisk hann ríkr konungr ok mikill fyrir sér, ok réð fyrir Húnalandi ok er inn mesti hermaðr. Hann á son við konu sinni er hét Rerir. Hann vex þar upp með feðr¹ sínum ok gerisk brátt mikill vexti ok gerviligr.

Nú gerisk Sigi gamall maðr at aldri. Hann átti sér marga qfundarmenn, svá at um síðir réðu þeir á hendr honum er hann trúði bezt, en þat váru bræðr konu hans. Þeir gera þá til hans, er hann varir sízt ok hann var fáliðr fyrir, ok bera hann ofrliði; ok á þeim fundi fell Sigi með hirð sinni allri. Sonr hans, Rerir, var ekki í þeim háska, ok fær hann sér^a mikit lið af vinum sínum ok landshqfdingjum, svá at hann eignaðisk bæði land ok konungdóm eptir Siga, feðr sinn. Ok nú er hann þykkisk hafa fótum undir komizk í ríki sínu, þá minnisk hann á þær sakir er hann átti við móðurbæðr sína, er drepit hqfðu fōður hans, ok safnar konungr sér nú liði miklu ok ferr nú á hendr frændum sínum með þenna her, ok þykkja þeir fyrr gert hafa sakar við sik, þó at hann mæti lítills frændsemi þeira, ok svá gerir hann fyrir því at eigi skilsk hann fyrri við en hann hafði drepit alla feðrbana sína, þó at óskapliga væri fyrir alls^b sakir.² Nú eignask hann lōnd ok ríki ok fé. Gerisk hann nú^c meiri fyrir sér en faðir hans.

Rerir fekk sér nú herfang mikit^d ok konu þá er honum þótti við sitt hæfi, ok eru þau mjok lengi ásamt, ok eigu þau^e engan erfingja ok ekki barn. Þat hugnar þeim báðum^f illa, ok biðja þau goðin með miklum áhuga at þau gæti^g sér barn. Þat er nú sagt at Frigg^h heyrir bæn þeira, ok segir Óðni^h hvers þau biðja. Hann verðr eigi qrþrifráða ok tekrⁱ óskmey^h sína, dóttur Hrímnis jōtuns, ok fær í hōnd henni

^a svá B

^b Final letter doubtful (also Ol), allar B, who thought it might read alla.

^c Hann nú illeg. V ^d herfang mikit illeg. V

^e ásamt . . . þau illeg. V. For eigu B reads eiga.

^f barn . . . báðum illeg. V

^g þau goðin . . . gæti illeg. V ^h svá Óðinn B

ⁱ þat er nú . . . tekr, blurred largely to illeg. V

¹ As opposed to being sent away to be brought up by 'foster-parents', a by no means uncommon practice, e.g. Regin was Sigurd's 'foster-father' (see p. 23), Brynhild was Heimir's 'foster-daughter' (see p. 42).

² The slaying of a kinsman was held to be a particularly odious offence. It was proper and natural to be *frændrækinn*, attached to one's kin, cf. p. 10, and not merely for sentiment's sake: the family or rather 'clan' was the essential social and ethical reality. The individual's strength, confidence, his

Odin now went with him when he left the country and accompanied him for a remarkably long way, not giving up until he had brought him to several fighting ships. Sigi now embarked on free-booting expeditions with the force his father had secured for him before they parted. He was successful in his raids, and his affairs so progressed that he managed to carve out land for himself, and eventually a kingdom. Next he made an important match, and became a powerful and important king, ruling over the land of the Huns, and he was a truly great warrior. By his wife he had a son called Rerir. He was brought up there with his father,¹ and soon grew into a tall and able lad.

And now Sigi had grown old in years. There were many who were jealous of him, and so in the end those whom he trusted most—his brothers-in-law—plotted against him. They turned on him when he was least expecting anything, having only a few men there with him, and they got the better of him, and Sigi and all his followers were killed in the fight. His son Rerir was away at the time of danger, and he gathered a strong force of friends and influential nobles, with the result that he took over the domains and the royal power in succession to his father, Sigi. Now when he thought that he had found his feet in his kingdom, he remembered his grievances against the uncles who had killed his father. And so the king got together a powerful army and immediately marched with it against these kinsmen of his. And if he set but little store by the ties of kinship between them, they, after all, seem to have been the first to do him wrong. And that is how he acted, for he did not rest until he had killed all his father's murderers, though from every point of view it was a bad business.² And now he took over lands, authority and wealth, and became a man of greater consequence than his father had been.

Rerir now acquired a great deal of plunder through his raids, and married a woman who seemed likely to make him a suitable wife, and they lived together for a very long time, but had no heir, nor any child at all. Neither was at all happy about this and they earnestly prayed to the Gods to let them have a child. And we are next told how Frigg³ heard their prayer and spoke to Odin about their request. He was not at a loss what to do and fetched a valkyrie⁴ of his, the daughter of

personal qualities in general, were in him but not in the first instance of him : they came to him from his membership of the 'clan'. (Cf. de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 173 f.).

³ Odin's consort, goddess of hearth and home. Her aid with Freyja's was often invoked during childbirth.

⁴ The Icel. *óskmey*, lit. 'wish-maiden', is one of the names given to the valkyries, Odin's handmaidens (see Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*).

eitt ^a epli ok biðr hana færa konungi. Hon tók við eplinu ok brá á sik krákuham ok flýgr til þess er hon kemr þar sem konungrinn er, ok sat á haugi.¹ Hon lét falla eplit í kné konunginum. Hann tók þat epli ok þóttisk vita hverju gegna mundi; gengr nú heim af hauginum ok til sinna manna, ok kom á fund dróttningar ok etr þat epli sumt.²

2

Þat ^b er nú at segja at dróttning finnr þat brátt at hon mundi vera með barni, ok ferr þessu fram langar stundir at hon má eigi ala barnit. Þá kemr at því, at Rerir skal fara í leiðangr, sem siðvenja er til konunga, at friða land sitt. Í þessi ferð var þat til tíðenda, at Rerir tók sótt ok því næst bana ok ætlaði at sækja heim Óðin,³ ok þótti þat mörqum fýsiligt í þann tíma.

Nú ferr inu sama fram um vanheilsu dróttningar at hon fær eigi alit barnit, ok þessu ferr fram sex vetr at hon hefir þessa sótt. Nú finnr hon þat, at hon mun eigi lengi lifa, ok bað nú at hana skyldi særa til barnsins, ok svá var gert sem hon bað. Þat var sveinbarn, ok sá sveinn var mikill vexti þá er hann kom til, sem ván var at. Svá er sagt at sjá sveinn kyssti móður sína áðr hon dæi.^c Þessum er nú nafn gefit ^d ok er kallaðr Volsungr. Hann var konungr yfir Húnalandi eptir feðr sinn. Hann var snemma mikill ok sterkr ok áræðisfullr um þat er mannaum þótti í ok karlmennska. Hann gerisk ^d inn mesti hermaðr ok sigrsæll í orrostum þeim sem hann átti í herförum.

Nú þá er hann var alroskinn at aldri, þá sendir Hrímnir honum Hljóð, dóttur sína, er fyrr er ^e getit, þá er hon fór með eplit til Reris, feðr Volsungs. Nú gengr hann at eiga hana, ok eru þau lengi ásamt, ok eru góðar samfarar þeira. Þau áttu tíu sonu ok eina dóttur. Inn elzti sonr þeira hét Sigmundr,⁵ en Signý ⁶ dóttir. Þau ^f váru tvíburar, ok váru þau fremst ok vænst um alla hluti barna Volsungs konungs, ok váru þó allir miklir fyrir sér, sem lengi hefir uppi verit haft ok at

^a jotuns . . . eitt illeg. V

^b The initial þ no longer visible V. The preceding ch. heading reads Fæddr Volsungr.

^c áðr hon dæi illeg. V

^d Hann gerisk illeg. V

^e thus Ol, om. V

^f Between dóttir and þau space for c. 4 letters (cf. Ol).

¹ The 'howe' or grave-mound, particularly of a forebear, was thought to be the source of various supernaturally bestowed gifts, including, in cases of infertility, the power to beget offspring (see N. K. Chadwick: 'Norse Ghosts', *Folklore* LVII (1946), 64), here reinforced by Odin's apple which seems to be efficacious in promoting fertility or virility (see Introduction p. xxxv). It is of interest in this connection that the Æsir were prevented from ageing by the apples of the goddess Idun (see Jónsson, *SnE* 48, and Bugge, 'Iduns Æbler', 13 ff.). At the same time there is reason to suppose that the howe was the

Hrimnir the Giant, put an apple in her hand and told her to take it to the king. She seized the apple, assumed the form of a crow and flew until she came to where the king was sitting on a howe.¹ She dropped the apple into the king's lap. He picked the apple up and guessed what it was all about. Then he left the howe and went back to his men, had a talk with the queen and ate part of the apple.²

2

You must now hear how the queen soon found that she was going to have a child, but her condition continued for a very long time without her being able to give birth to the child. Then Rerir found it necessary to set off on a campaign—quite a usual thing for a king to do—in order to keep his country peaceful. As it happened, Rerir was taken ill on the expedition and died soon after. He meant to join Odin,³ and many people in those days thought this a good thing to do.

The queen's morbid condition, her inability to give birth to the child, remained unchanged, and after six years she was still not free of it. She then realised that she had not long to live and thereupon ordered that the child should be cut out of her, and what she ordered was done. It was a boy, and, as might be expected, the lad was a fair size when he was delivered. People say that the boy kissed his mother before she died. A name was now given to him⁴ and he was called Volsung. He succeeded his father as king of Hunland. From an early age he was big and strong and ready for anything that seemed to need grit and courage. He grew into a most able soldier, and luck was on his side in the battles he fought while campaigning.

Now when he reached manhood Hrimnir sent his daughter, Hliod, to him—she has already been mentioned as bringing the apple to Rerir, Volsung's father. He now married her. They lived together a long time and their marriage was a happy one. They had ten sons and one daughter; their eldest son was called Sigmund,⁵ and their daughter Signy.⁶ They were twins and in every way the best looking and the most remarkable of King Volsung's children, though, indeed, all of them were outstanding, a fact long recognised, just as the Volsungs

seat of legal authority on which the king presided in his official capacity (see Axel Olrik, 'At sidde på høj', *Danske Studier* (1909), 1 ff.).

² No other translation seems possible, though it might be more reasonable to suppose that either the queen alone, or both, ate part of the apple.

³ Not necessarily because he was descended from Odin, see Appendix A.

⁴ Glossary s.v. nafnfestr

⁵ See Introduction p. xxxiv

⁶ Her rôle is in some ways parallel to Gudrun's, see Introduction p. xxxiv.

ágætum gert verit, hversu Völsungar hafa verit ofrkappsmenn miklir ok hafa verit fyrir flestum mönnum sem getit er í fornsögum, bæði um fróðleik ok íþróttir ok alls háttar kappgirni.

Svá er sagt at Völsungr konungr lét gera höll eina ágæta, ok með þeim hætti at ein eik mikil stóð í höllinni, ok limar trésins með fögrum blómum stóðu út um ræfr hallarinnar, en leggrinn stóð niðr í höllina, ok kólluðu þat barnstokk.¹

3

Siggeirr ^a ² hefir konungr heitit. Hann réð fyrir Gautlandi.³ Hann var ríkr konungr ok fjölmennr. Hann fór á fund Völsungs konungs, ok bað hann Signýjar til handa sér. Þessu tali tekr konungr vel ok svá synir hans, en hon sjálf var þessa ófús, biðr þó feðr sinn ráða ^b sem qðru því sem til hennar tæki. En konunginum sýndisk ^c þat ráð at gipta hana, ok var hon föstnuð Siggeiri konungi.

En þá er sjá ^d veizla ok ráðahagr skal takask, skal Siggeirr konungr sækja veizluna til Völsungs konungs. Konungr bjósk við veizlunni eptir inum beztum föngum. Ok þá er þessi veizla var albuín, kómu þar boðsmenn Völsungs konungs ok svá Siggeirs konungs at nefndum degi, ok hefir Siggeirr konungr marga virðuliga menn með sér. Svá er sagt at þar váru miklir eldar gerðir eptir endilangri höllinni, en nú stendr ^e sjá inn mikli apaldr í miðri höllinni, sem fyrr var nefndr.

Nú er þess við getit, at þá er menn sátu við eldana um kveldit, at maðr einn gekk inn í höllina. Sá maðr er mönnum ókunnr at sýn. Sjá maðr hefir þess háttar búning, at hann hefir heklu flekkótta yfir sér. Sá maðr var berfættir ok hafði knýtt línbrókum at beini. Sá maðr hafði sverð í hendi ok gengr at barnstokkinum, ok hqtt ^f síðan á hqfði. Hann var hárr mjök ok eldiligr ok einsýnn.⁴ Hann bregðr sverðinu ok stingr því í stokkinn, svá at sverðit søkkir at hjóltum upp. Qllum mönnum fellusk kveðjur við þenna mann. Þá tekr hann til orða ok mælti :

^a *The preceding ch. heading is illeg. (also for Ol).*

^b *B adds þessu*

^c *Konungrinn tók B*

^d *Fol. 3^d ends here : much of it is now blurred to illegibility, especially from med þeim hætti at ein eik (end of ch. 2). For sjá B reads þessi.*

^e *thus Ol, sendr V* *illeg. V*

¹ This is not only an echo of the great world ash, Yggdrasil, around which, according to Snorri (Jónsson, *SnE* 34 ff.) the universe was constructed and which towered up into the heavens, overshadowing the earth. Barnstock may originally have been an apple tree and an essential element in a fertility cult.

have long been famed for their autocratic inflexibility of purpose, and for being far ahead of most people, as old stories tell, in knowledge, attainments and in enterprise generally.

The tale goes that King Volsung had a magnificent hall built, and in such a way that there was a great tree standing inside, its branches with their colourful flowers spreading out through the roof, while its trunk stretched down into the hall, and they called it Barnstock.¹

3

There was a king whose name was Siggeir.² He ruled over Gautland³ and was a powerful king with a large band of followers. He paid a visit to King Volsung and asked him for Signy's hand in marriage. The king was favourably disposed to the idea, as were his sons, but she herself was against it, though she asked her father to decide about this as he did about other matters concerning her. And the king thought it advisable for her to be married, and she was betrothed to King Siggeir.

And when the time came for the marriage-feast and the wedding, Siggeir was to go to King Volsung's for the festivities. The king made preparations for a splendid feast, and when all was in readiness for the feast both King Volsung's and King Siggeir's guests arrived on the appointed day, and King Siggeir had many people of note with him. It is said that big fires were lighted down the length of the hall, and as was mentioned before, the great apple-tree stood there in the middle of the hall.

Now the story goes that while the men were sitting round the fires in the evening, a man came into the hall. It was a man whose appearance was unfamiliar. This is how he was dressed : he had on a mottled cape, he was bare-footed and had bound his linen breeches round the leg. The man held a sword in his hand and went up to Barnstock and had a low hood over his head ; he was very grey, venerable and had but one eye.⁴ He drew back the sword and plunged it into the trunk, so that the sword sank in up to the hilt. No one was able to utter a word of welcome to the man. Then he started to speak, and these were his words :

Its name means ' child-trunk ' (see Bugge, *Völs*. p. 87, l. 10, n., and Introduction p. xxxv).

² See Introduction p. xxxv

³ i.e. modern Götland in Sweden

⁴ This is none other than Odin : his appearance is often described in these or similar terms.

‘ Sá er þessu sverði bregðr ór stokkinum, þá skal sá þat þiggja at mér at gjöf, ok skal hann þat sjálfr sanna at aldri bar hann betra sverð sér í hendi en þetta er.’^a

Eptir þetta gengr sjá inn gamli maðr út ór hollinni, ok veit engi hvern hann er eða hvert hann gengr. Nú standa þeir upp ok metask ekki við at taka sverðit. Þykkisk sá bezt hafa er fyrst náir. Síðan gengu til inir gofgustu menn fyrst, en þá hvern at qðrum. Engi kemr sá til er náí, því at engan veg bifask er þeir taka til. Nú kom til Sigmundr, sonr Vqlsungs konungs, ok tók ok brá sverðinu ór stokkinum, ok var sem laust lægi fyrir honum. Þetta vápn sýndisk qllum svá gott, at engi þóttisk sét hafa jafngott sverð, ok býðr Siggeirr^b honum at vega þrjú jafnvægi gulls. Sigmundr segir :

‘ Þú máttir taka þetta sverð eigi síðr en ek þar sem þat stóð, ef þér semði^c at bera, en nú fær þú þat aldri, er þat kom áðr í mína hönd, þótt þú bjóðir við allt þat gull er þú átt.’

Siggeirr konungr reiddisk við þessi orð, ok þótti sér háðuliga svarat vera. En fyrir því at honum var svá varit at hann var undirhyggjumaðr mikill, þá lætr hann nú sem hann hirði ekki um þetta mál, en þat sama kveld hugði hann laun fyrir þetta, þau er síðar kómu fram.

4

Nú^d er þat at segja at Siggeirr gengr í rekkju hjá Signýju þenna aptan. En næsta dag eptir þá var veðr gott. Þá segir Siggeirr konungr at hann vill heim fara ok bíða eigi þess er vindr yxi eða sjá gerir ófæran. Ekki er þess getit at Vqlsungr konungr letti hann eða synir hans, allra helzt er hann sá at hann vildi ekki annat en fara frá veizlunni.¹

Nú mælti Signý við feðr sinn : ‘ Eigi vilda ek á brott fara með Siggeiri, ok eigi gerir hugr minn hlæja við honum, ok veit ek af framvísi minni ok af kynfylgju² várri at af þessu ráði stendr oss mikill ófagnaðr, ef eigi er skjótt brugðit þessum ráðahag.’

‘ Eigi skaltu þetta mæla, dóttir,’ sagði hann, ‘ því at þat er skqmm

^a Of en þetta er *only first e is visible*.

^b thus *Ol, om. V* ^c *sæmndi B*

^d *The initial N is illeg. V. The preceding ch. heading now illeg. Ol made out an S followed by for at a space of two or three letters, but nothing more.*

¹ These often continued for several days.

² It is just possible that *kynfylgja* should be taken here as the equivalent of *ættarfylgja* (see Glossary s.v. *fylgja*) and interpreted concretely as ‘family guardian spirit’ (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion*, I, 227), but G. Turville-Petre, ‘Liggja fylgjur þinar til Íslands’, *Saga Book of the Viking Society* (1937-45), 125, argues convincingly against this.

‘The man to pull out this sword from the trunk shall receive it from me as a gift, and he will find out for himself that he never bore in hand a better sword than this.’

After that the old man went out of the hall and no one knew who he was or where he was going. They now got up, and no one hung back in taking hold of the sword. He counted himself best off who got it out first. Then the most notable among them went up first, and afterwards the others, one by one. And not one who went up succeeded, for when they took hold, the sword would not budge. Then Sigmund, the son of King Volsung, came up, gripped the sword and pulled it out of the trunk as if he found it quite loose. It seemed to everyone such an excellent weapon that no one thought he had ever seen such a fine sword, and Siggeir offered to weigh him out three times its weight of gold.

‘You could have taken it from where it was fixed as easily as I did, if it were right for you to bear it,’ replied Sigmund, ‘but as it is, my hand was the first it came to, and you’ll never get it, even if you offer all the gold you possess for it!’

King Siggeir grew angry at these words and considered that he had been given an insolent answer, but since he was a great dissembler, he now made as if he didn’t mind about this matter, yet that very evening he thought of how he could pay him back, and that is what later came about.

4

That night, as we are told, Siggeir slept with Signy. The next day the weather was fine, so King Siggeir said that he would return home and not wait for the wind to rise and make the sea impassable. The story does not say that King Volsung dissuaded him, nor that his sons did so, especially when he saw that Siggeir wanted only to be off and to leave the wedding festivities.¹

Signy now spoke to her father: ‘I don’t want to go away with Siggeir, nor do I feel at all warmly towards him, and my gift of second sight which runs in the family² tells me that this business will result in a great deal of misery for us, unless this marriage is speedily annulled.’

‘You must not speak like that, daughter,’ he said, ‘because it

mikil bæði honum ok svá oss at brigða þessu við hann at saklausu, ok eigum vér þá engan trúnað undir honum né vingan ef þessu er brugðit, ok mun hann gjalda illu oss, slíkt er hann má, ok samir þat eina at halda af várri hendi.^a

Nú býsk Siggeirr konungr til heimferðar. Ok áðr þeir fóru frá boðinu, þá bauð hann Völsungi konungi, mági sínum, til sín á Gautland ok sonum hans öllum með honum á þriggja mánaða fresti ok því öllu liði sem hann vildi með sér hafa ok honum væri til vegsemðar. Vill nú Siggeirr konungr gjalda í því þat er á skorti brúðlaupsgerðina, fyrir þess sakir er hann vildi eigi meir vera en eina nótt, ok er ekki þat siðr manna at gera svá. Nú heitr Völsungr konungr ferðinni, ok koma á nefndum degi. Þá skiljask þeir mágar, ok ferr Siggeirr konungr heim með konu sína.

5

Nú ^a er at segja frá Völsungi konungi ok sonum hans at þeir fara at ákveðinni stundu til Gautlands at boði Siggeirs konungs, mágs síns, ok hafa þrjú skip ór landi ok öll vel skipuð, ok verða vel reiðfara ok koma skipum sínum við Gautland, en þat var sið um aptan.

En þann sama aptan kom Signý, dóttir Völsungs konungs, ok kallar feðr sinn á einmæli ok bræðr sína, segir nú ætlan sína ok Siggeirs konungs at hann hefir dregit saman óvígjan her,—‘ok ætlar at svíkja yðr. Nú bið ek yðr,’ segir hon, ‘at þér farið þegar aptur í yðart ríki ok fáið yðr lið sem mest ok farið higat síðan ok hefnið yðar sjálfir ok gangið eigi í ófæru, því at eigi missi þér svika af honum, ef eigi taki þér þetta bragð sem ek beiði yðr.’

Þá mælti Völsungr konungr : ‘Þat munu allar þjóðir at orðum gera at ek mælti eitt orð óborinn, ok strengða ek þess heit at ek skylda hvárki flýja eld né járn fyrir hræzlu sakir, ok svá hefi ek enn gert hér til, ok hví munda ek eigi efna þat á gamals aldri ? Ok eigi skulu meyjar því bregða sonum mínum í leikum at þeir hræðisk bana sinn, því at eitt sinn skal hverr deyja, en má engi ^b undan komask at deyja um sinn. Er þat mitt ráð at vér flýjum hvergi ok gerum af várri hendi sem hreystiligast. Ek hefi barizk hundrað sinnum, ok hefi ek haft stundum meira lið, en

^a *The initial N now illeg. Of the preceding ch. heading Fall Völsungs decipherable, but nothing else (as for Ol).*

^b *B emends to engi má.*

would be most shameful for him, and for us, to make void the agreement with him without just cause, and if it is annulled, then we can neither trust him, nor keep his friendship, and he will pay us back as best he can, and the only proper thing to do is for us to keep our part of the bargain.'

King Siggeir now made ready for the journey home, but before they left the scene of their wedding he invited his father-in-law, King Volsung, to visit him in Gautland in three months' time, accompanied by all his sons and by as many men as he desired, and as would befit his state. In this way, King Siggeir wanted to make up for his lack of courtesy at the wedding celebrations in not wishing to stay for more than one night, which was not at all the usual way for anyone to behave. King Volsung then promised to make the journey and arrive on the appointed day. Then son-in-law and father-in-law parted, and Siggeir returned home with his wife.

5

At the appointed time, so the story tells us, King Volsung and his sons set off for Gautland in compliance with their in-law Siggeir's request. They put off from the land in three ships, all well manned, had a very good voyage and got their ships to Gautland, arriving in the late evening.

That same evening, Signy, King Volsung's daughter, came to ask her father and her brothers to have a private talk with her. She then said that in her opinion—it was also King Siggeir's own!—Siggeir had got together a large force that was invincible—'And he means to break faith with you. So I beg you,' she said, 'to get back to your own country immediately. Get hold of as large a number of men as you can, then return and get your revenge, rather than walk into this trap, for you'll find no lack of treachery in him if you don't adopt the plan I desire you to.'

Then King Volsung said: 'All nations will make a byword of it, seeing that while yet unborn I spoke one word and swore an oath that fear would make me run from neither fire nor iron. Up to this moment I have acted accordingly, and why should I not keep to it in old age? And when the games are on there'll be no young women pointing a finger at my sons for fearing to meet death, for everybody must die sometime—there's no escape from dying the once! And my decision is that we do not run, and let us act our part as bravely as we can. I have fought on a hundred occasions, sometimes I had a bigger force,

stundum minna, ok hefi ek jafnan sigr haft, ok eigi skal þat spyrjask at ek flýja né friðar biðja.'

Nú grætr Signý sárliga ok bað at hon skyldi eigi koma til Siggeirs konungs.

Völsungr konungr svarar : ' Þú skalt at vísu fara heim til bónda þíns ok vera samt með honum,^a hversu sem með oss ferr.'

Nú gengr Signý heim, en þeir búa eptir um nóttina. Ok um myrgininn þegar er dagur, þá biðr Völsungr konungr upp standa sína menn alla ok ganga á land upp ok búask við bardaga. Nú ganga þeir á land upp allir alvápnaðir, ok er eigi langt at biða áðr þar kemr Siggeirr konungr með allan sinn her, ok verðr þar in harðasta orrosta með þeim, ok eggjar konungr lið sitt til framgöngu sem harðligast, ok er svá sagt at Völsungr konungr ok synir hans gengu átta sinnum í gegnum fylkingar Siggeirs konungs um daginn, ok höggva á tvær hendr. Ok er þeir ætla enn svá at fara, þá fellr Völsungr konungr í miðri fylkingu sinni ok þar allt lið hans með honum, nema synir hans tíu, því at miklu meira ofrefli var í móti en þeir mætti við standa. Nú eru synir hans allir teknir ok í bönd reknir ok á brott leiddir.

Signý varð vör við at faðir hennar var drepinn en bræðr hennar höndum teknir ok til bana ráðnir. Nú kallar hon Siggeir konung á einmæli. Nú mælti Signý :

' Þess vil ek biðja þik at þú látir eigi svá skjótt drepa bræðr mína, ok látið þá heldr setja í stokk, ok kemr mér at því, sem mælt er, at unír auga meðan á sér, ok því bið ek þeim eigi lengra, at ek ætla at mér muni ekki tjóa.'

Þá svarar Siggeirr : ' Ær ertu ok ørvita er þú biðr bræðrum þínum meira bóls en þeir sé höggnir, en þó skal þat veita þér því at þess betr þykki mér er þeir þola verra ok hafa lengri kvöl til bana.'

Nú lætr hann svá gera sem hon bauð,^b ok var tekinn einn mikill stokkr ok felldr á fætr þeim tíu bræðrum í skógi einshvers staðar, ok sitja þeir nú þar þann dag allan til nætr. En at miðri nótt þá kom þar ylgr ein ór skógi gömul at þeim er þeir sátu í stokkinum. Hon var bæði mikil ok illilig. Henni varð þat fyrir at hon bítr einn þeira til bana. Síðan át hon^c þann upp allan. Eptir þat fór hon í brott. En eptir um morgininn þá sendi Signý mann til bræðra sinna, þann er hon trúði bezt, at vita^d hvat títt sé. Ok er hann kemr apr, segir hann henni at dauðr sé einn þeira. Henni þótti þetta mikit, ef þeir skulu svá fara

^a thus *Ol*, hann *V*

^b *B* emends to bað which is more usual in this general context.

^c thus *Ol*, om. *V*

^d at vita, thus *Ol*, ok *V*

and sometimes it's been smaller, but I've always been the victor, and there'll be no report of my running away or of my suing for peace.'

Then Signy wept bitterly and begged not to have to go back to King Siggeir.

'Of course you must go back to your husband,' King Volsung replied, 'and stay with him, whatever happens to us.'

So Signy went back and they stayed where they were that night. But at daybreak the next morning King Volsung ordered all his men to get up, go ashore and prepare for action. So they all went ashore fully armed, and there was not long to wait before King Siggeir came up with the whole of his army. The battle that now ensued between them was very fierce: the king hotly urged on his men to the attack, and we are told that King Volsung and his sons went right through the enemy ranks eight times that day, slashing right and left, and just as they were about to do so again King Volsung fell in the middle of his line and so, too, all his men, except his ten sons, with him, for they were faced by a superior force, far greater than they could stand against. All his sons were then taken prisoner, bound and marched off.

Signy discovered that her father had been killed and her brothers captured and sentenced to death. She then asked King Siggeir for a word in private, and Signy then said:

'I want to ask you not to have my brothers executed so swiftly, have them put in the stocks instead. There's a saying that fits my case: "happy the eye that gazes its fill," but I'm not asking for them to be given any longer, since I imagine it would be useless.'

'You must be quite out of your mind to ask a worse fate for your brothers than being instantly put to the sword,' answered Siggeir, 'but I'll do as you ask, for the more they suffer and the slower they die, the better I like it.'

He then had what she desired carried out, and a large pair of stocks was fetched, and at a certain spot in the forest the ten brothers had their legs clamped in, and there they sat all day, and night came on. And at midnight an old she-wolf came out from the forest to where they were sitting in the stocks. She was large and evil-looking. What she did was to bite one of them to death, thereupon devour him, and then go away. The following morning Signy sent her most trusted man to her brothers to find out what had happened. And when he came back he told her that one of them was dead. She thought it would be terrible if they were all to go the same way, yet she could do nothing to help

allir, en hon mátti ekki duga þeim. Skjótt er þar frá at segja. Nú nær í samt kom sjá in sama ylgr um miðnætti ok etr einn þeira senn til bana unz allir eru dauðir, nema Sigmundr einn er eptir. Ok nú, áðr tífunda nótt kemr, sendir Signý trúnaðarmann sinn til Sigmundar, bróður síns, ok seldi í hönd honum hunang ok mælti at hann skyldi ríða á andlit Sigmundar ok leggja í munn honum sumt. Nú ferr hann til^a Sigmundar ok gerir sem honum var boðit ok fór heim síðan.

Um nóttina eptir þá kemr sú in sama ylgr at vanda sínum ok ætlaði at bíta hann til bana sem bróðr hans. En nú dregr hon veðrit af honum, þar sem hunangit var á riðit, ok sleikir andlit hans allt með tungu sér ok réttir síðan tunguna í munn honum. Hann lætr sér verða óbilt ok beit í tunguna ylginni. Hon bregðr við fast ok hnykkir at sér hart ok rak fœtrna í stokkinn svá at hann klofnaði allr í sundr, en hann helt svá fast at tungan gekk ór ylginni upp ór tungurótunum, ok fekk af því bana. En þat er søgn sumra manna at sú in sama ylgr væri móðir Siggeirs konungs ok hafi hon brugðit á sik þessu líki fyrir trollskaþar sakir ok fjölkyngi.

6

Nú^b er Sigmundr lauss orðinn, en brotinn er stokkrinn, ok hefsk Sigmundr þar nú við í skóginum. Enn sendir Signý at vita hvat títt er eða hvárt Sigmundr lifir. En er þeir koma, þá segir hann þeim allan atburð, hvé farit hafði með þeim ok ylginni. Nú fara þeir heim ok segja Signýju hvat títt er. Fór hon nú ok hittir bróður sinn, ok taka þau þat ráð at hann gerir þar jarðhús í skóginum, ok ferr nú því fram um hríð at Signý leynir honum þar, ok fær honum þat er hann þurfti at hafa. En Siggeirr konungr ætlar at þeir sé allir dauðir Völsungar.

Siggeirr konungr átti tvá sonu við konu sinni, ok er frá því^c sagt, þá er inn ellri sonr hans er tíu vetra,^d at Signý sendir hann til móts við Sigmund, at hann skyldi veita honum lið, ef hann vildi nokkut leita við at hefna feðr síns. Nú ferr sveinninn til skógarins ok kemr síð um aptaninn til jarðhúss Sigmundar, ok tekr hann við honum vel at hófi, ok mælti at hann skyldi gera til brauð þeira,—‘en ek mun sækja eldivið,’—ok selr í hönd honum einn mjölbelg, en hann ferr sjálf at sækja viðinn. Ok er hann kemr aptr, þá hefir sveinninn ekki at gert um brauðgerðina. Nú spyrr Sigmundr hvárt búit sé brauðit.

^a ferr hann til *illeg. V*

^b *Initial N now illeg. The preceding ch. heading illeg. (also for OI).*

^c þeim *B*

^d er tíu vetra *illeg. V*

them. What happened is soon told : on nine successive nights that same wolf appeared at midnight, and each time she killed and ate one of them until all were dead and Sigmund alone remained. And now, before the tenth night came, Signy sent her trusted servant to her brother, Sigmund. She had handed him some honey with instructions to smear it over Sigmund's face and to put some of it in his mouth. He now went off to Sigmund, did what he'd been told to do, and so returned.

That night the same wolf came as usual, intending to bite him to death as she had his brothers. But then she sniffed the honey that had been smeared on him, and she licked his face all over with her tongue, and then thrust her tongue into his mouth. He took heart and bit into the wolf's tongue. At this she gave a violent jerk and strained backwards, pressing hard with her paws against the stocks which as a result split apart. But he held on so firmly that the wolf's tongue was torn out by the roots, and that finished her. And some people have it that the wolf was King Siggeir's mother who had assumed that shape on account of witchcraft and magic.

6

So Sigmund was freed and the stocks were broken, but he stayed on in the woods. Signy sent again to find out what had happened and whether Sigmund was alive. And when they arrived he told them all the details of his encounter with the wolf. Then they returned and told Signy what had taken place. So she went and found her brother, and they decided that he should build an underground retreat in the woods, and what now happened for a time was that Signy hid him there and provided him with everything he needed. And King Siggeir imagined that all the Volsungs were dead.

King Siggeir had two sons by his wife, and we are told that when the elder son was ten years old, Signy sent him off to find Sigmund so that he could help him, should he wish to make any attempt to avenge his father. So the boy made his way to the forest, and late in the evening he came to Sigmund's retreat where he was given a tolerable welcome and told that he could make bread for them both—'And I'll go and look for firewood.' And handing him a bag of flour, Sigmund himself went to look for the wood. But when he came back the lad had still done nothing about making the bread. Then Sigmund asked whether the bread were ready.

Hann segir : ' Eigi þorða ek at taka mjölbelginn fyrir því at þar lá nokkut kykt í mjölinu.'

Nú þykkisk Sigmundur vita at þessi sveinn mun eigi svá vel hugaðr, at hann vili hann með sér hafa. Nú er þau systkin finnask, segir Sigmundur at hann þótti ekki manni at nærr, þótt sveinninn væri hjá honum.

Signý mælti : ' Tak þú hann þá ok drep hann. Eigi þarf hann þá lengr at lifa.'

Ok svá gerði hann.

Nú líðr^a sjá vetr. Ok einum vetri síðar þá sendir Signý inn yngra son sinn á fund Sigmundar, ok þarf þar eigi sögu um at lengja, ok fór sem samt sé, at hann drap þenna svein at ráði Signýjar.

7

Þess^b er nú við getit eitthvert sinn þá er Signý sat í skemmu sinni, at þar kom til hennar ein seiðkona¹ fjölkunnig harðla mjök. Þá talar Signý við hana :

' Þat vilda ek,' segir hon, ' at vit skiptum hömum.'²

Hon segir, seiðkonan : ' Þú skalt fyrir ráða.' Ok nú gerir hon svá af sínum brögðum at þær skipta litum, ok sezk seiðkonan nú í rúm Signýjar at ráði hennar ok ferr í rekkju hjá konungi um kveldit, ok ekki finnr hann at eigi sé Signý hjá honum.

Nú er þat frá Signýju at segja at hon ferr til jarðhúss bróður síns ok biðr^c hann veita sér herbergi um nóttina,—' því at ek hefi villzk á skóginum úti, ok veit ek eigi hvar ek fer.'

Hann mælti at hon skyldi þar vera,^d ok vildi eigi synja henni vistar, einni konu, ok þóttisk vita at^e eigi mundi hon svá launa honum góðan beina at segja til hans. Nú ferr hon í herbergi til hans,^f ok setjask til matar. Honum varð opt litit til hennar ok lízk konan væn ok fríð. En er þau eru mettt, þá segir hann henni at hann vill at þau hafi eina rekkju um nóttina, en hon brýzk ekki við því, ok leggr hann hana hjá sér þrjár nætr samt. Eptir þat ferr hon heim ok hittir seiðkonuna ok bað at þær skipti aprt litum, ok svá gerir hon.

Ok er^g fram liðu stundir,^h fæðir Signý sveinbarn. Sjá sveinn var

^a líðr *illeg.* V

^b *The preceding ch. heading now barely legible.* Ol reads Signy gat Sinfjötla.

^c *illeg.* V

^d þar vera *illeg.* V

^e vita, at *illeg.* V

^f til hans *illeg.* V

^g thus Ol, om. V

^h stu- *illeg.* V

¹ See Glossary s.v. *seiðkona*

² A magic process whereby each, it was believed, assumed the exact appearance of the other, the personality remaining unchanged.

‘ I didn’t dare touch the bag,’ he replied, ‘ because there was something alive in the flour.’

Then Sigmund thought to himself that he could see that the lad was not so plucky that he’d want to keep him there. The next time Sigmund and his sister met, he said he seemed no nearer to getting a man, even though the boy was staying with him.

‘ Then seize and kill him,’ said Signy. ‘ There’s no need for him to live any longer.’

And that’s what he did.

The winter passed, and the next winter Signy sent the younger son to stay with Sigmund, but there’s no need to make a long story of it, as the upshot was much the same : he killed the boy at Signy’s bidding.

7

The next thing to be told is how Signy was sitting one day in her private quarters when a sorceress,¹ highly skilled in magic arts, came to her there. Then Signy spoke to her :

‘ I should like the two of us to exchange shapes,’² she said.

‘ What you desire shall be done,’ the sorceress replied, and then by her arts she brought about an exchange of appearances, and after that the sorceress took Signy’s place as she was told to do. That night she slept with the king, and he didn’t notice that it wasn’t Signy who was with him.

Signy, we are now told, went to her brother’s retreat and asked him to give her shelter for the night—‘ For I am lost here in the forest, and I don’t know where I’m going.’

He said she could stay there, and that he would not refuse her shelter, all alone as she was, and he felt that she would not repay his hospitality by giving him away. So she joined him in the shelter and they sat down to a meal. He often glanced at her and she appeared to be a good-looking and attractive woman. And when they were satisfied, he told her that he wanted them to sleep together that night. She made no objection and for three nights in succession he laid her next to him. Afterwards she went back and found the sorceress, told her that they must now change back to their own shapes again, and the woman saw to it.

And after some time had passed, Signy gave birth to a son. The

Sinfjötli¹ kallaðr. Ok er hann vex upp, er hann bæði mikill ok sterkr ok vænn at álitu ok mjök í ætt Völsunga, ok er eigi allra tíu vetra er hon sendir hann í jarðhúsið til Sigmundar. Hon hafði þá raun gert við ina fyrri sonu sína, áðr hon sendi þá til Sigmundar, at hon saumaði at höndum þeim með holdi ok skinni. Þeir þolðu illa ok kriktu um. Ok svá gerði hon Sinfjötla. Hann brásk ekki við. Hon fló hann þá af kyrtlinum svá at skinnit fylgði ermunum. Hon kvað honum mundu sárt við verða. Hann segir :

‘Lítit mundi slíkt sárt þykkja Völsungi.’ Ok nú kemr sveinninn til Sigmundar.

Þá bað Sigmundur hann knoða ór mjöli þeira, en hann vill sækja þeim eldivið, fær í hönd honum einn belg. Síðan ferr hann at viðinum. Ok er hann kom aptr, þá hafði Sinfjötli lokit at baka. Þá spurði Sigmundur ef hann hafi nökkt fundit í mjölinu.

‘Eigi er mér grunlaust,’ sagði hann, ‘at eigi hafi í verit nökkt kykt í mjölinu, fyrst er ek tók at knoða, ok hér hefi ek með knoðat þat er í var.’

Þá mælti Sigmundur ok hló við : ‘Eigi get ek þik hafa mat af þessu brauði í kveld því at þar hefir þú knoðat með inn mesta eitrorm.’ Sigmundur var svá mikill fyrir sér at hann mátti eta eit, svá at hann skaðaði ekki, en Sinfjötla hlýddi þat at eitir kæmi útan á hann, en eigi^a hlýddi honum at eta né drekka.

8

Þat^b er nú at segja at Sigmundi þykkir Sinfjötli of ungr til hefnda með sér ok vill nú fyrst venja hann með nökkt harðræði. Fara nú um sumrum víða um skóga ok drepa menn til fjár sér. Sigmundi þykkir hann mjök í ætt Völsunga, ok þó hyggir hann at hann sé sonr Siggeirs konungs, ok hyggir hann hafa illsku feðr síns,^c en kapp Völsunga, ok ætlar hann eigi mjök frændrækinn því at^d hann minnr opt Sigmund á sína harma ok eggjar mjök at^e drepa Siggeir konung.

Nú er þat eitthvert sinn at þeir fara enn á skóginn at afla sér fjár,

^a hann, en eigi *illeg.* V

^b *The preceding ch. heading now almost illeg. ; Ol reads þeir Sigmundur fóru í hamina.*

^c feðr síns *illeg.* V

^d mjök frændrækinn því at *illeg.* V. B adds mann after frændrækinn.

^e mjök at *illeg.* V

¹ The name probably means ‘he of the ash- (literally ‘cinder’) gold fetter’, and is thus a kenning for ‘wolf’, though *-fjötli* may be a variant of Germanic **fetulæ*, ‘spotted’, *sin-* being a later addition for alliterative purposes (in OE

boy was called Sinfjotli,¹ and when he grew older he was tall, strong and handsome, and took after the Volsung family very markedly, and he was scarcely ten years old when she sent him to join Sigmund in his retreat. Before sending her first two sons to Sigmund, she had submitted them to the following test: she sewed their tunics on to their arms, stitching through skin and flesh. They stood up to it badly, and screamed as it was being done. She did the same to Sinfjotli. He did not flinch. Then she stripped the tunic from him, so that the skin came off with the sleeves, and said that this would hurt him.

‘No Volsung would think much of a pain like that,’ was the reply, and so the lad came to Sigmund.

Sigmund then told him to use their flour to make dough, saying that he would go and look for firewood for them, and handed him a sack. He then went to fetch the wood, and when he came back Sinfjotli had finished baking. Then Sigmund asked if he had found anything in the flour.

‘I’m not at all sure that there wasn’t something alive in the flour when I first started kneading,’ he said, ‘but I kneaded in whatever was there.’

Sigmund laughed at that and said: ‘I don’t think you’ll eat any of this bread tonight, for you’ve kneaded in a huge poisonous snake.’ Sigmund was so hardy that he could take poison and yet come to no harm. But though Sinfjotli was able to stand outward contact with poison, he could neither eat nor drink it.

8

The story now tells how Sigmund thought Sinfjotli too young to go with him in search of vengeance, and decided he would first gain him experience in something that called for grit and determination. For some summers they roved far and wide through the forest and killed people for plunder. Sigmund thought that he took after the Volsungs, and markedly so, but he believed him to be King Siggeir’s son with his father’s evil inclinations, even if he did have the keenness and energy of the Volsungs; although he did not imagine he felt very attached to his family, for he often reminded Sigmund of his wrongs and kept urging him to kill King Siggeir.

Now one day they went again to the forest in order to find them-

he is called simply ‘Fitela’, see Introduction p. xii) and his name could thus reflect his incestuous origin.

en þeir finna eitt hús ok tvá menn sofandi í húsinu með digrum gullhringum. Þeir hófðu^a orðit fyrir ósköpum því at úlfahamir hengu í^b húsinu yfir þeim. It tíunda hvert dægr máttu þeir komask ór hómunum. Þeir váru konungasynir. Þeir Sigmundur fóru í hamina ok máttu eigi ór komask, ok fylgði sú náttúra sem áðr var, létu ok vargsrøddu. Þeir skildu báðir røddina. Nú leggjask þeir ok á merkr, ok ferr sína leið hvárr þeira. Þeir gera þann mála með sér at þeir skuli til hættu, þótt sjau menn sé, en eigi framar, en sá láta^c úlfsrødd er fyrir ófriði yrði.

‘Bregðum nú eigi af þessu,’ segir Sigmundur, ‘því at þú ert ungr ok áræðisfullr. Munu menn gott hyggja til at veiða þik.’

Nú ferr sína leið hvárr þeira. Ok er þeir váru skilðir, finnr Sigmundur sjau^d menn ok lætr^e úlfsrøddu. Ok Sinfjötli heyrir þat, ferr^f til þegar ok drepr alla. Þeir skiljask enn. Ok er Sinfjötli hefir eigi lengi farit um skóginn, finnr hann ellifu^g menn ok bersk við þá, ok ferr svá at hann drepr þá alla. Hann verðr ok sárr mjök,^h ferr undir eina eik, hvílisk þar. Þá kemr Sigmundur þar at ok mælti :

‘Því kallaðir þú ekki?’

Sinfjötli sagði : ‘Eigi vilda ek kveðja þik til liðs.’ Þú þátt lið til at drepa sjau menn, en ek em barn at aldri hjá þér, ok kvadda ek eigi liðs at drepa ellifu menn.’

Sigmundur hleypr at honum svá hart at hann stakar við ok fellr. Sigmundur bítr í barkann framan. Þann dag máttu þeir eigi komask ór úlfahómunum. Sigmundur leggr hann nú á bak sér ok berr heim í skálann, ok sat hann yfir honum, en bað troll¹ taka úlfhamina.

Sigmundur sér einn dag hvar hreysikettir tveir váru, ok bítr annarr í barkann qðrum, ok rann sá til skógar ok hefir eitt blað ok færir yfir sárit, ok sprettr upp hreysikøttrinn heill. Sigmundur gengr út ok sér hvar hrafn flýgr með blaðit, ok færði honum. Hann dregr þetta yfir sárit Sinfjötla, en hann sprettr upp þegar heill, sem hann hefði aldri sárr verit. Eptir þat fara þeir til jarðhúss ok eru þar til þess er þeir

^a thus *Ol*, indistinct *V*, hafa *B*

^b illeg. *V*, *Ol* reads yfir and emends to í.

^c illeg. *V*, láti *B*

^d illeg. *V*, and for *Ol*. Sigmund seems to have fought seven men to judge from *Ol*'s (and *B*'s) reading drepa sjau menn (now illegible) a few lines below.

^e lét *B*

^f *B* adds hann.

^g illeg. *V*, *Ol* doubtful. A few lines below Sinfjötli says he slew ellifu menn.

^h sárr mjök illeg. *V*, lúinn *B*

¹ The space between hvílisk þar and at drepa sjau menn (at the foot of fol. 8^v) was mostly illegible for *Ol* who read E . . . d . . . ge ok fara . . . hann mælti til . . . att lið til. For the passage between hvílisk þar and eigi liðs (hjá þér-eigi liðs beginning the next fol. and still legible) the paper MSS substitute þá kemr

selves riches, and they came to a cabin, and in the cabin there were two men asleep, wearing heavy gold rings. An evil fate had overtaken them, for there were wolf skins hanging above them in the cabin. They could shed the skins once every ten days. They were princes. Sigmund and Sinfjotli got into the skins, and could not get out of them again—the strange power was there, just as before, and they even howled like wolves, both understanding what was being said. They now went off into the woods, each of them his own way, but they made an arrangement that they would risk it against up to seven men, but not against more, and if one of them should meet with trouble, then he was to howl.

‘And let’s keep to that,’ said Sigmund, ‘because you are a young dare-devil people will think it grand to hunt down.’

Then they each went off on their own. And after they had separated, Sigmund came across seven men and howled with his wolf’s voice. Sinfjotli heard it, was immediately on the spot, and killed all of them. They separated once more. And before Sinfjotli had been roving about the forest very long, he encountered eleven men and fought with them, and the result was that he killed them all. He, too, was badly hurt, got under an oak and rested there. Then Sigmund came up and said :

‘Why didn’t you call out?’

‘I didn’t want to call on you for help,’ said Sinfjotli. ‘You were given help in killing seven men, yet I’m no more than a child compared with you, and I didn’t call for help to kill eleven.’

Sigmund went for him so violently that he staggered and fell. Sigmund bit him in the throat. That day they were unable to shed the wolf skins. Sigmund then hoisted him over his shoulder and carried him back to the hut, and watched over him, and wished the wolf skins to the devil.¹

One day Sigmund chanced to see two weasels, and one bit the other in the throat, then ran to the woods and fetched a leaf, and laid it on the wound, and the weasel leapt up well again. Sigmund went out and saw a raven flying along with a leaf which it brought to him. This he drew across Sinfjotli’s wound and he immediately jumped up quite recovered, just as if he had never been hurt. After that they went to their underground lair and stayed there until they could throw off the

Sigmundur þar at ok mælti : því kallaðir þú ekki ? Sinfjötli sagði : Eigi vilda ek kveðja þik til liðs. *This edition adopts the version of the paper MSS for the lines Ol found mostly illeg., but links it to his reading of the last line of fol. 8^v and the still legible words beginning fol. 9^r by inserting his att lið til emended to þátt lið til. Fol. 8^v beginning above at menn sofandi and ending at barn at aldri is extremely blurred and badly creased and now for the most part illegible.*

¹ See Glossary s.v. *troll*

skyldu fara ór úlfhömumum. Þá taka þeir ^a ok brenna í eldi ok báðu engum at meini verða. Ok í þeim ósköpum ^b unnu þeir mǫrg frægðarverk í ríki Siggeirs konungs.

Ok er Sinfjötli er frumvaxti, þá þykkisk Sigmundr hafa reynt hann mjök. Nú líðr eigi langt áðr Sigmundr vill leita til fǫðurhefnda, ef svá vildi takask. Ok nú fara þeir í brott frá jarðhúsinu einnhvern dag ok koma at bæ Siggeirs konungs síð um aptan ok ganga inn í forstofuna þá er var fyrir höllinni, en þar váru inni qlker, ok leynask þar. Dróttningin ^c veit nú hvar þeir eru ok vill hitta þá. Ok er þau finnask, gera þau þat ráð at þeir leitaði til fǫðurhefnda er náttaði.

Þau Signý ok konungr eigu tvau börn ung at aldri. Þau leika sér á gólfinu at gulli ok renna því eptir gólfinu hallarinnar ok hlaupa þar eptir. Ok einn gullhringr hrýtr útar í húsit þar sem þeir Sigmundr eru, en sveinninn hleypr eptir at leita hringins. Nú sér hann hvar sitja tveir menn miklir ok grimmligir ok hafa síða hjálma ok hvítar brynjur. Nú hleypr hann í höllina innar fyrir feðr sinn ok segir honum hvat hann hefir sét. Nú grunar konungr at vera munu svik við hann. Signý heyrir nú hvat þeir segja. Hon stendr upp, tekr börnin bæði ok ferr útar í forstofuna til þeira ok mælti at þeir skyldu þat vita at þau hefði sagt til þeira—

‘Ok ræð ek ykkir at þit drepið þau.’

Sigmundr segir: ‘Eigi vil ek drepa börn þín, þótt þau hafi sagt til mín.’

En Sinfjötli lét sér ekki feilask ok bregðr sverði ok drepr hvárttveggja barnit ok kastar þeim innar í höllina fyrir Siggeir konung. Konungr stendr nú upp ok heitr á menn at taka þá menn er leynzk hǫfðu í forstofunni um kveldit. Nú hlaupa menn útar þangat ok vilja hǫndla þá, en þeir verja sik vel ok drengiliga, ok þykkisk þá sá verst hafa lengi er næst er. Ok um síðir verða þeir ofrlíði bornir ok verða handteknir ok því næst í bǫnd reknir ok í fjotra settir, ok sitja þeir þar þá nótt alla.

Nú hyggr konungr at fyrir sér, hvern dauða hann skal fá þeim þann er kenndi lengst. Ok er morginn kom, þá lætr konungr haug mikinn gera af grjóti ok torfi. Ok er þessi haugr er gerr, þá lét hann setja hellu mikla í miðjan hauginn, svá at annarr jaðarr hellunnar horfði upp, en

^a B adds þá.

^b uskǫ- *illeg. V*

^c dróttning B, dróttinn V

wolf skins. They seized them and fed them to the flames saying they should trouble no one again. While under that curse they had carried out many daring exploits in King Siggeir's territory.

And by the time Sinfjotli had grown up, Sigmund believed that he'd tested him thoroughly. And it wasn't long before Sigmund wished to set about avenging his father, if only it could be done. So one day they left their forest retreat, coming to King Siggeir's estate late in the afternoon, and they went into the outer room at the front of the hall. Inside there were some ale barrels and they hid themselves there. Now the queen got to know where they were, and wanted to go and see them, and when they met, they decided that they would attempt to avenge their father after nightfall.

Signy and the king had two children of tender years. They were amusing themselves on the floor with golden playthings, bowling them along the hall floor and running after them. And a gold ring rolled out into the room where Sigmund and his companion were, and the lad ran after the ring to look for it. And then he spied two tall, fierce-looking men sitting there, wearing helmets which came down low over their faces, and shining coats of mail. Then he ran back into the hall to his father and told him what he had seen. So the king suspected that there must be treachery afoot. Now Signy heard what they said. She stood up, took both children and went into the outer room to them and said that they ought to know that the children had given them away—

‘And I think you had better kill them.’

‘I'll not kill your children, even if they have given me away,’ said Sigmund.

But Sinfjotli was nothing daunted. He drew his sword and killed both the children, throwing them into the inner part of the hall right in front of King Siggeir. Then the king stood up and called to his retainers to seize the men who had been hiding in the outer room throughout the evening. So some of his men ran to the outer room, intending to lay hands on them, but they put up an able and courageous defence and for a long time the man who felt he was the worst off was the one nearest them. But in the end they were overpowered, seized, and then bound and shackled, and there they sat all that night.

Meantime the king pondered what would be the slowest way he knew of putting them to death, and when morning came, the king had a huge burial-mound made out of stones and turf, and when the mound was ready he had a great stone slab fixed in the middle in such a way that one end of the slab pointed up and the other down. It was big

annarr niðr. Hon var svá mikil at hon tók tveggja vegna, svá at eigi mátti komask hjá henni. Nú lætr hann taka þá Sigmund ok Sinfjötla ok setja í hauginn sínum megin hvárn þeira, fyrir því at honum þótti þeim þat verra at vera eigi báðum saman, en þó mátti heyra hvárr til annars. Ok er þeir váru at tyrfa hauginn, þá kemr Signý þar at ok hefir hálm í fangi sér ok kastar í hauginn til Sinfjötla ok biðr þrælana leyna konunginn þessu. Þeir já því, ok er þá lokit aptr hauginum.

Ok er náttá tekr, þá mælti Sinfjötli til Sigmundar :

‘ Ekki ætla ek okkr mat skorta um hríð hér ; hefir dróttningin kastat fleski inn í hauginn ok vafit um útan hálm.’

Ok enn þreifar hann um fleskit ok finnr at þar var stungit í sverði Sigmundar, ok kenndi at hjóltunum er myrkt var í hauginum, ok segir Sigmundi. Þeir fagna því báðir. Nú skýtr Sinfjötli blóðreflinum fyrir ofan helluna ok dregr fast. Sverðit bítr helluna. Sigmundr tekr nú blóðrefilinn, ok ristu nú í milli sín helluna ok létta eigi fyrr en lokit er at rísta, sem kveðit er :

(1) Ristu af magni
mikla hellu
Sigmundr hjörvi
ok Sinfjötli.

Ok nú eru þeir lausir báðir saman í hauginum ok rísta bæði grjót ok járn^a ok komask svá út ór hauginum.

Þeir ganga nú heim til hallarinnar. Eru menn þá í svefni allir. Þeir bera við at höllinni ok leggja eld í viðinn, en þeir vakna við gufuna er inni eru, ok þat at höllin logar yfir þeim. Konungr spyr hverir eldana gerði.

‘ Hér eru vit Sinfjötli, systursonr minn,’ sagði Sigmundr, ‘ ok ætlum vit nú at þat skulir þú vita at eigi eru allir Völsungar dauðir.’

Hann biðr systur sína út^b ganga ok þiggja af honum góð metorð ok mikinn sóma ok vill svá bæta henni sína harma.

Hon svarar : ‘ Nú skaltu vita hvárt ek hefi munat Siggeiri konungi dráp Völsungs konungs. Ek lét drepa börn okkur er mér þóttu of sein til fōðurhefnda, ok ek fór í skóg til þín í völvulíki, ok er Sinfjötli okkarr sonr. Hefir hann af því mikit kapp at hann er bæði sonarsonr ok dóttursonr Völsungs konungs. Hefi ek þar til unnit alla hluti at

^a *Probably a mistake for torfi, cf. above haug mikinn af grjóti ok torfi (cf. Ol).*

^b *B adds att.*

enough to reach right across from side to side, so that it was impossible to get round it. Then he had Sigmund and Sinfjotli brought out and put inside the mound, one on each side by himself, for he thought it would be worse for them if they were not both together, but could none the less hear each other. And while they were busy covering over the mound with turf, Signy came up with an armful of straw. She threw it into the mound to Sinfjotli, and told the serfs to conceal this from the king. They said they would do so, and then the mound was closed in.

Now when it began to grow dark, Sinfjotli said to Sigmund :

‘ I don’t think we’ll go short of food in here for a time. The queen threw down some pork into the mound—she wrapped it up in straw.’

Once more he felt the pork over and discovered that Sigmund’s sword had been thrust into it—he recognised it by the hilt for it was dark in the mound, and he told Sigmund. They were both overjoyed. Then Sinfjotli thrust the point of the sword up over the stone slab and pulled down hard. The sword bit into the stone. Sigmund now took hold of the sword point, and then they sawed through the stone, not giving up until the sawing was completed, as the poet says :

(1) They cut with might
the massive slab,
Sigmund with his blade
and Sinfjotli.

So both were now free together in the mound, and they sawed through stones and iron, too, and in this way they got out of the mound.

They then went back to the hall where everyone was asleep. They brought up wood to the hall and set fire to the wood, and those inside were awakened by the smoke and the hall all ablaze above them. The king asked who had started the fire.

‘ Here we are, myself and Sinfjotli, my sister’s son,’ said Sigmund, ‘ and now we intend you to know that not all the Volsungs are dead.’

He told his sister to come out and receive from him every consideration, and high esteem, meaning in this way to make up for what she had suffered.

‘ You’ll know now whether or not I have remembered King Siggeir’s killing of King Volsung against him ! ’ she answered, ‘ and I had our children killed when they seemed to me all too tardy in avenging our father, and in the shape of some sorceress I came to you in the forest, and Sinfjotli is your son, and mine. His immense vigour comes from being King Volsung’s grandson on his father’s as well as his mother’s

Siggeirr konungur skyldi bana fá. Hefi ek ok svá mikit til unnit at fram kæmisk hefndin, at mér er með engum kosti líft. Skal ek nú deyja með Siggeiri konungi lostig er ek átta hann nauðig.⁷

Síðan kyssti hon Sigmund, bróður sinn, ok Sinfjötla,^a ok gekk inn í eldinn ok bað þá vel fara. Síðan fekk hon þar bana með Siggeiri konungi ok allri hirð sinni.

Þeir frændr fá sér lið ok skipa, ok heldr Sigmundur til ættleifðar sinnar ok rekr ór landi þann konung er þar hafði í sezku eptir Völsung konung. Sigmundur gerisk nú ríkr konungur ok ágætr, vitr ok stórráðr. Hann átti þá konu er Borghildr hét. Þau áttu tvá sonu. Hét Helgi annarr, en annarr Hámundr. Ok er Helgi var fæddr, kómu til nornir¹ ok veittu honum formála ok mæltu at hann skyldi verða allra konunga frægastr. Sigmundur var þá kominn frá orrostu ok gekk með einum lauk² í mót syni sínum, ok hér með gefr hann honum Helga³ nafn ok þetta at nafnfesti⁴: Hringstaði ok Sólfjöll⁵ ok sverð, ok bað hann vel fremjask ok verða í ætt Völsunga.^b Hann gerisk stórlýndr ok vinsæll ok fyrir flestum mönnum qðrum at allri atgervi. Þat er sagt at hann rézk í hernað þá er hann var fimmtán vetra gamall. Var Helgi konungur yfir liðinu, en Sinfjötli var fenginn til^c með honum, ok réðu báðir liði.

9

Þat^d er sagt at Helgi finnr þann konung í hernaði er Hundingr^e hét. Hann var ríkr konungur ok fjölmennr ok réð fyrir lönnum.⁷ Þar teksk orrosta með þeim, ok gengr Helgi fast fram, ok lýksk með því sjá bardagi at Helgi fær sigr, en Hundingr konungur fellr ok mikill hluti liðs hans. Nú þykkir Helgi hafa vaxit mikit, er hann hefir fellt svá^e ríkan konung. Synir Hundings bjóða nú út her í mót Helga ok vilja hefna fōður síns. Þeir eiga harða orrostu, ok gengr Helgi í gegnum

^a *illeg. V*

^b *Völsungs B*

^c *illeg. V*

^d *The preceding ch. heading illegible. Ol reads Helgi fekk Sigrúnar.*

^e *illeg. V*

¹ See Glossary s.v. *nornir*

² *Laukr* is etymologically identical with and often connotes the Eng. 'leek'. It can also, as here, mean 'garlic' which was considered effective in warding off evil of various kinds (cf. also st. 11).

³ See Introduction p. xxxvi. Helgi appears as the son of king Halfdan of Denmark in Snorri's *Ynglinga saga*, in *Hrólfs saga Kraka*, in *Beowulf* (as Hálga) and in Saxo Grammaticus who alone of the non-Völsung texts tells of his victory over Hunding and Hoddbrodd.

⁴ See Glossary s.v. *nafnfestr*

⁵ *Sólfjöll* is unidentified; *Hringstaði* may be Ringsted in Zealand, at times the seat of the Danish kings.

side. Everything I have done has been to bring about King Siggeir's death. And I have done so much to achieve vengeance that to go on living is out of the question. I shall now gladly die with King Siggeir, reluctant though I was to marry him.'

Then she kissed her brother Sigmund, and Sinfjotli, and walking into the inferno she bade them farewell, and thereupon she perished there with King Siggeir and all his men.

The two kinsmen got together a following and ships, and Sigmund set off for his ancestral lands, and he drove from the country the king who had established himself there in succession to King Volsung. Sigmund now became a powerful king, and was famous, intelligent and ambitious. He married a woman whose name was Borghild. They had two sons, Helgi was one and Hamund the other. And when Helgi was born, the Norns¹ appeared, and they granted him knowledge of his destiny, saying that of all kings he would be the most famous. Sigmund had just returned from battle, and taking with him some garlic² he went to see his son, and thereupon gave him the name of Helgi,³ and his gifts⁴ for the occasion were Hringstaðir and Solfell⁵ and a sword, and he told him he must get on in life, and be a real Volsung. He grew into a noble-minded and well-loved man, and his talents in every field outstripped those of most others. It is told that he went raiding when he was fifteen years old. Helgi was in charge of the troops, but Sinfjotli was put in with him, and they shared the command between them.

9

We are now told that while on a raiding expedition Helgi came across a king whose name was Hunding.⁶ He was a powerful king with men at his command and lands under his sway.⁷ Battle ensued between them and Helgi pressed on vigorously, and the battle ended with Helgi victorious, King Hunding falling with a large part of his following. So Helgi was held to have greatly increased his fame by the killing of such a powerful king. Hunding's sons then called out an army against Helgi, meaning to avenge their father. They had a violent battle, and Helgi fought his way through the brothers' serried ranks and made for

⁶ Hunding is known as a Norwegian king in *Flateyjarbók*, and as the son of the Saxon king, Syrik, in *Saxo Grammaticus*.

⁷ Thus emphasising that Hunding was no mere *herkonungr* or *sækonungr* whose authority did not extend beyond his army or fleet.

fylkingar þeira bræðra ok sækir at merkjum sona Hundings konungs ok felldi þessa Hundings sonu : Álf ok Eyjólf, Hervarð ok Hagbarð, ok fekk hér ágætan sigr.

Ok er Helgi ferr frá orrostu, þá fann hann við skóg einn konur margar ok virðuligar sýnum, ok bar þó ein af öllum. Þær riðu með ágætligum búningi. Helgi spyr þá at nafni er fyrir þeim var. En hon nefndisk Sigrún ok kvezk vera dóttir Högna ¹ konungs.

Helgi mælti : ‘ Farið heim með oss, ok verið velkomnar.’

Þá segir konungsdóttir : ‘ Annat starf liggr fyrir oss en drekka með þér.’

Helgi svarar : ‘ Hvat er þat, konungsdóttir ?’

Hon svarar : ‘ Hogni konungr hefir heitit mik Hoddbroddi, syni Granmars konungs, en ek hefi því heitit at ek vil eigi eiga hann heldr en einn krákuunga. En þó mun þetta fram fara, nema þú bannir honum ok komir í mót honum með her ok nemir mik á brott, því at með engum konungi vilda ek heldr setr búa en með þér.’

‘ Ver kát, konungsdóttir,’ sagði hann. ‘ Fyrri skulum vit reyna hreysti okkra ^a en þú sér honum gipt, ok reyna skulum vit áðr hvár af öðrum berr, ok hér skal lífit á leggja.’

Eptir þetta sendir Helgi menn með fégjöfum at stefna at sér mönnum, ok stefnir öllu liðinu til Rauðabjarga. Beið Helgi þar til þess er mikill flokkur kom til hans ór Heðinsey,² ok þá kom til hans mikit lið ór Nörvasundum³ með fögrum skipum ok stórum. Helgi konungr kallar til sín skipstjórnarmann sinn er Leifr⁴ hét, ok spurði ef hann hefði talit lið þeira. En hann svarar :

‘ Eigi er hægt at telja, herra, skip þau er komin eru ór Nörvasundum. Eru á tólf þúsundir manna, ok er þó hálfu fleira annat.’

Þá mælti Helgi konungr at þeir skyldu snúa á þann fjörð er heitir Varinsfjörðr,⁵ ok svá gerðu þeir. Nú gerði at þeim storm mikinn ok svá stóran sjó at ^b því var líkast at heyra er bylgjur gnúðu á borðunum, sem þá er björgum lysti saman. Helgi bað þá ekki óttask ok eigi svipta seglunum, heldr setja hvert hæra en áðr. Þá var við sjálf at yfir mundi

^a thus B, Ol okkar

^b thus Ol, om. V

¹ Not, of course, the same Hogni as Gunnar's brother. A king Hogni of Eystra Gautland appears in Snorri's *Ynglinga saga* (ch. 42) where he is related by marriage to Granmar, referred to in *VS* as father of Hoddbrodd whom Saxo mentions as the son of the Swedish king Regner.

² The Baltic island of Hiddensee

³ The Straits of Gibraltar! This can hardly be the place originally meant. *HH I*, st. 24, l. 4, the equivalent passage in *PE*, reads *Orvasund* of which nothing is known : perhaps Stralsund, cf. Detter-Heinzel II, 329. The modern *Öresund* was *Eyrasund* in Old Icelandic.

the standards of King Hunding's sons. Of these sons he struck down the following: Alf, Eyjolf, Hervard and Hagbard, and in this he won an outstanding victory.

And on his way from the battle Helgi met a large party of women near a forest. Their appearance was impressive, but there was one who stood out among them all. They were riding along magnificently arrayed. Helgi asked the woman who was leading them what her name was, and she said she was called Sigrun and that she was the daughter of King Hogni.¹

'Come home with us, and welcome,' said Helgi.

'Drinking with you is not the business we have ahead of us,' said the princess then.

'What is that, Princess?' was Helgi's answer.

'King Hogni,' she replied, 'has promised me in marriage to Hoddbrodd, King Granmar's son, but I have vowed to have him no more than I'd have a fledgling crow as a husband—but it will none the less come to that, unless you stop him and come against him with an army and take me away, for there is no king I would rather make a home with than with you.'

'Take heart, Princess,' he said. 'We shall try out our courage rather than have you married to him, and we shall first prove which of us shall prevail against the other, and I pledge my life to this.'

And then Helgi dispatched men with gifts of money to invite people to join him, and he made Raudabjorg the assembly point for the whole force. There Helgi waited until a large body of men joined him from Hedinsey,² and then there joined him a great number from Norvasund³ with fine large ships. King Helgi summoned the ship's captain—his name was Leif⁴—and asked if he had counted their numbers, and he replied:

'It's not easy to count them, Sir. On the ships come from Norvasund there are twelve thousand men, but the other force is far greater.'

King Helgi then ordered them to turn into the firth called Varinsfjord,⁵ and they did so. And then a heavy storm hit them: the sea was so high that when the waves roared against the sides of the ship, it sounded just as if boulders were being clashed together. Helgi then told them not to be afraid, and not to strike sail, but instead to hoist each of them higher than before—they were then on the verge of

¹ A common enough name. *HH* I, st. 23, l. 6, reads *Hjorleif*, 'sword Leif', which may be a reference to an early Icelandic settler of that name.

² Unidentified, perhaps Warnemünde bay, cf. *Detter-Heinzel* II, 330.

ganga áðr þeir kæmi at landi. Þá kom þar Sigrún, dóttir Hogna konungs, af landi ofan með miklu liði, or snýr þeim í góða höfn er heitir at Gnipalundi.¹ Þessi tíðendi sá landsmenn, ok kom af landi ofan bróðir Hoddbrodds konungs er þar réð fyrir er heitir at Svarinshaugi.² Hann kallar á þá ok spyr hverr stýrði inu mikla liði. Sinfjötli stendr upp ok hefir hjálm á höfði skyggðan sem gler ok brynju hvíta sem snjó, spjót í hendi með ágætligu merki ok gullrendan skjöld fyrir sér. Sá kunnir at mæla við konunga :

‘Seg svá er þú hefir gefit svínum ok hundum ok þú finnr konu þína at hér eru komnir Vqlsungar, ok mun hér hittask í liðinu Helgi konungr ef Hoddbroddr vill finna hann, ok er þat hans gaman at berjask með frama, meðan þú kyssir ambáttir við eld.’

Granmarr³ svarar : ‘Eigi muntu kunna mart virðuligt mæla eða^a forn minni at segja, er þú lýgr á höfðingja. Mun hitt sannara at þú munt lengi hafa fæzk á mörkum⁴ úti við vargamat ok drepit bræðr þína,⁵ ok er kynligt er þú þorir at koma í her með góðum mönnum, er mart kalt hræ hefir sogit til blóðs.’

Sinfjötli svarar : ‘Eigi muntu gloggt muna nú er þú vart vqlvan⁶ í Varinsey⁷ ok kvazk^b vilja mann eiga ok kaust mik til þess embættis at vera þinn maðr. En síðan vartu valkyrja⁸ í Ásgarði,⁹ ok var við sjálft at allir mundi berjask fyrir þínar sakar, ok ek gat við þér nú varga á Láganesi,¹⁰ ok var ek faðir allra.’

Granmarr svarar : ‘Mart kanntu ljúga. Ek hygg at engis faðir mættir þú vera síðan þú vart geldr af dætrum jötunsins á Þrasnesi,¹¹ ok ertu stjúpsonr Siggeirs konungs ok látt á mörkum úti með vögum, ok kómu þér qll hópp senn at hendi. Þú drapt bræðr þína ok gerðir þik at illu kunnan.’

Sinfjötli svarar : ‘Hvært mantu^c þat er þú vart merrin með hestinum Grana, ok reið ek þér á skeið á Brávelli?¹² Síðan vartu geitasveinn Gqlnis jötuns.’¹³

^a ok *B*

^b thus *Ol*, kvezk *V*

^c thus *Ol*, máttu *V*

¹ Unidentified

² Unidentified, perhaps the Schwerin district, cf. Detter-Heinzel II, 330.

³ He appears in Snorri's *Ynglinga saga* (ch. 40-42) where he is king of *Suðrmanland* (Södermanland) and related by marriage to king Hogni of Gautland (see p. 15, n. 1). Granmar, Hoddbrod's father, has been erroneously substituted here and in the following conversation for Hoddbrod's brother Gudmund (see *HH* I, st. 32, l. 2).

⁴ See p. 10

⁵ See p. 12

⁶ See Glossary s.v. *vqlva*. This and the two following charges contain the implication of homosexuality.

⁷ Unidentified, seemingly connected with Varinsjforðr, cf. n. 5, p. 15.

foundering before they could make land. Then Sigrun, King Hogni's daughter, came down to the shore with a large party and directed them to a good harbour called Gnipalund.¹ The inhabitants of that region saw what was happening, and down to the shore came King Hoddbrodd's brother who governed the district known as Svarinshaug.² He called to them and asked them who was in command of that large force. Sinfjotli stood up, and on his head was a helmet that shone like glass, and he wore a coat of mail as dazzling as snow, a spear with a fine pennant was in his hand and before him he held a shield inlaid with gold. He knew how to parley with kings :

' Say this, when you have fed your pigs and dogs and you meet your wife : the Volsungs are here, and King Helgi can be found here with his troops, if Hoddbrodd wants to find him, and it is his pleasure to fight with glory while you kiss serving girls by the fire.'

' You don't seem able to say anything very honourable or talk of old memories, you who tell lies about men of rank ', answered Granmar.³ ' It's probably truer to say that you have long fed on wolf's fare out in the forests⁴ and have killed your brothers,⁵ and it is extraordinary that you who have sucked the blood of many a cold corpse should dare to come in an army with decent men.'

' You probably won't now remember clearly the time you were the Sibyl⁶ on Varinsey,'⁷ answered Sinfjotli, 'and declared you desired a mate and chose me for this office of husband. And later on you were a valkyrie⁸ in Asgard⁹ and they were all on the point of fighting because of you, and in Laganess¹⁰ I begot nine wolves on you, and I was the father of them all.'

' You're a great hand at lying,' answered Granmar. ' I don't think you could be any one's father, since you were castrated by the giant's daughters on Thrasness,¹¹ and you are King Siggeir's stepson, and you roamed abroad with wolves in the forest, and every stroke of evil fate descended on you at once. You killed your brothers and got yourself an evil name.'

' Do you remember the time you were the mare with the steed Grani,' Sinfjotli answered, ' and I rode you at full gallop on Bravoll ?¹² Later you were the giant¹³ Golnir's goat-herd.'

⁸ See Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*

⁹ The abode of the Æsir

¹⁰ Substituted for *á nesi Ságo* of *PE (HH I, st. 39, l. 2)*.

¹¹ Substituted for Thor's Ness (*á þórsnessi*) of *PE (HH I, st. 40, l. 8)*.

¹² Possibly a specific reference to the famous battle of Brávellir, near modern Norrköping in Sweden, fought c. 750 (see Turville-Petre, *Heroic Age*, 56 f.).

¹³ See Glossary s.v. *troll*

Granmarr segir : ' Fyrri vilda ek seðja fugla á hræi þínu en deila við þik lengr. '

Þá mælti Helgi konungur : ' Betra ^a væri ykkir ok meira snjallræði at berjask en mæla slíkt er skömm ^b er at heyra, ok ekki eru Granmars synir vinir mínir, en þó eru þeir harðir menn. '

Granmarr ríðr nú í brott ok til fundar við Hoddbrodd ¹ konung þar sem heita Sólfjöll. ² Hestar þeira heita Sveipuðr ok Sveggjuðr. Þeir mættusk í borgarhliði ok segja honum hersögu. Hoddbroddr konungur var í brynju ok hafði hjálm á höfði. Hann spyrir hverir þar væri,—

' Eða hví eru þér svá reiðuligir ? '

Granmarr segir : ' Hér eru komnir Völsungar ok hafa tólf þúsundir manna við land ok sjau þúsundir við ey þá er Søk ³ heitir, en þar sem heitir fyrir Grindum ⁴ er þó mestr fjöldi, ok hygg ek nú at Helgi muni nú berjask vilja. '

Konungur segir : ' Gerum þá boð um allt vart ríki ok sækjum í mót þeim. Siti sá engi heima er berjask vill. Sendum orð Hrings ⁵ sonum ok Högna konungi ok Álfi inum gamla. Þeir eru bardagamenn miklir. '

Fundusk þeir þar er heitir Frekasteinn, ⁶ ok tóksk þar hørð orrosta. Helgi gengr fram í gegnum fylkingar. Þar varð mikit mannfall. Þá sá þeir skjaldmeyjaflokk ⁷ mikinn, svá sem í loga ⁸ sæi. Þar var Sigrún konungsdóttir. Helgi konungur sótti í mót Hoddbroddi konungi ok fellir hann undir merkjum.

Þá mælti Sigrún, ' Haf þökk fyrir þetta þrekvirki. Skipt mun nú löndum. Er mér þetta mikill tímadagr, ok muntu fá af þessu veg ok ágæti, er þú hefir svá ríkan konung felldan. '

Þat ríki tók Helgi konungur ok dvalðisk þar lengi ok fekk Sigrúnar ok gerðisk frægr konungur ok ágætr, ok er hann hér ekki síðan við þessa sögu.

Völsungar ^c fara nú heim ok hafa enn mikit aukit sitt ágæti. Sinfjötli

^a *illeg. V*

^b er skömm *illeg. V*

^c *The preceding ch. heading reads Frá Völsungum.*

¹ See pp. 14, n. 3, 15, n. 1

² See p. 14, n. 5

³ Substituted for *sofn* of *PE (HH I, st. 50, l. 3)*.

⁴ Substituted for *PE (HH I, st. 50, l. 1)* í *grindom*, 'within the stakes' (that form a harbour), wrongly understood as a place name.

⁵ Sigurd Hring was the nephew of King Harald War-tooth who was reputed to have vanquished his uncle at the battle of Brávellir (see p. 16, n. 12), he married a certain Alfhild, a descendent of Alf the Old who appears with him here.

‘ I would rather feed birds on your carcase than wrangle with you any longer,’ said Granmar.

‘ It would be better for you both and a more sensible plan to fight,’ said King Helgi then, ‘ rather than say things that are shameful to hear, and Granmar’s sons are no friends of mine, hardy men though they are.’

Granmar now rode away to a meeting with King Hoddbrodd¹ at a place called Solfell.² The names of their horses were Sveipud and Sveggjud. They met at the castle gate and he was told of the enemy’s approach. King Hoddbrodd was clad in mail and a helmet was on his head. He asked who they were—

‘ And why are you looking so angry ? ’

‘ The Volsungs are here with twelve thousands men just off shore, and seven thousand off the island of Sok,’³ said Granmar, ‘ but their largest force is off Grindir,⁴ so I think that Helgi probably means to fight.’

‘ Then let us send a summons throughout all our kingdom,’ said the king, ‘ and march against them. No staying at home for those who wish to fight ! Let us send word to Hring’s⁵ sons and to King Hogni and to Alf the Old—they are great warriors.’

They met at a place called Frekastein,⁶ and there a fierce battle began. Helgi pressed forward through the enemy ranks. Casualties became heavy there. They saw a large party of warrior-maids⁷; it was like gazing into flame.⁸ Sigrun, the king’s daughter, was there. King Helgi made at King Hoddbrodd and struck him down beneath his banners.

‘ My thanks for this great feat,’ said Sigrun then. ‘ The lands will now change hands. This is a happy day for me, and from this you will win honour and renown, striking down so powerful a king.’

King Helgi took over the kingdom and lived there long. He married Sigrun, becoming a renowned and distinguished king, but he does not appear again in this saga.

So the Volsungs returned home and once more they had considerably

⁶ Unidentified

⁷ The *skjaldmær* (lit. ‘ shield-maiden ’) was a maiden armed for battle, cf. also Brynhild’s statement, p. 43, and p. 69 where Gudrun sides with her brothers against her husband Atli. The term was sometimes used of valkyries. See Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*.

⁸ The effect produced by highly polished armour.

leggsk nú í hernað af nýju. Hann sér eina fagra konu ok girnisk mjök at fá hennar. Þeir konu bað ok bróðir Borghildar er átti Sigmundr konungr. Þeir þreyta þetta mál með orrostu, ok fellir Sinfjötli þenna konung. Hann herjar nú víða ok á margar orrostur ok hefir ávalt sigr. Gerisk hann manna frægstr ok ágætastr ok kemr heim um haustit með mǫrgum skipum ok miklu fé.

Hann segir feðr sínum tíðendin, en hann segir dróttningu. Hon biðr Sinfjötla fara brott ór ríkinu ok læzk eigi vilja sjá hann. Sigmundr kvezk eigi láta hann í brott fara ok býðr at bæta henni¹ með gulli ok miklu fé, þótt hann hefði engan^a fyrri bætt mann; kvað engi frama at sakask við konur. Hon má nú þessu eigi á leið koma.

Hon mælti, 'þér skuluð ráða, herra—þat samir.'

Hon gerir nú erfi bróður síns með ráði konungs, býr nú þessa vezlu með inum beztum fǫngum ok bauð þangat mǫrgu stórmenni. Borghildr bar mǫnnum drykk.² Hon kemr fyrir Sinfjötla með miklu horni.

Hon mælti, 'Drekk nú, stjúpsonr.'

Hann tók við ok sá í hornit ok mælti,

'Gjöróttir er drykkinn.'

Sigmundr mælti, 'Fá mér þá.' Hann drakk af.

Drottningin mælti, 'Hví skulu aðrir menn drekka fyrir þik öl?' Hon kom í annat sinn með hornit, 'Drekk nú,' ok frýði honum með mǫrgum orðum. Hann tekr við horninu ok mælti, 'Flærðr er drykkinn.'

Sigmundr mælti, 'Fá mér þá.'

It þriðja sinn kom hon ok bað hann drekka af ef hann hefði hug Völsunga.

Sinfjötli tók við horninu ok mælti, 'Eitr er í drykknum.'

Sigmundr svarar, 'Lát grǫn sía, sonr,' sagði hann. Þá var konungr drukinn mjök, ok því sagði hann svá. Sinfjötli drekk ok fellr þegar niðr. Sigmundr ríss upp ok gekk harmr sinn nær bana ok tók líkit í fang sér ok ferr til skógar ok kom loks at einum firði. Þar sá hann mann³ á einum báti litlum. Sá maðr spyrr ef hann vildi piggja at honum far yfir fjörðinn. Hann játtar því. Skipit var svá litit at þat bar þá eigi, ok var líkit fyrst flutt, en Sigmundr gekk með firðinum. Ok því næst hvarf

^a engum B

¹ i.e. for the killing of her brother by Sinfjötli. See Glossary under *morð*.

² It was common for the lady or sometimes the daughter of the house to show hospitality in this way (cf. *Wealhtheow* in *Beowulf*, Klaeber, ll. 612 ff.).

³ This is Odin once again.

added to their reputation. Sinfjotli went off raiding again. He saw a good-looking woman and desired her very much. The brother of Borghild, King Sigmund's wife, was also seeking this woman's hand in marriage. They fought a battle over their differences and Sinfjotli struck down the king concerned. He now went raiding over a wide area, fought many battles and was always victorious. He became a most famous and distinguished man and returned home that autumn with a large number of ships and wealth in plenty.

He told his father the news, and his father told the queen. She ordered Sinfjotli to leave the realm and said that she had no wish to see him. Sigmund declared he would not allow him to leave, and offered to compensate her¹ with gold and great riches, though previously he had never paid compensation to anyone. He said there was no distinction to be won in choosing to quarrel with a woman. So she was not able to get her own way in the matter.

'Yours must be the decision, Sire, that is only proper', she said.

Then, with the king's consent, she set about the arrangements for her brother's funeral feast, providing the best of food and drink, and she invited many important men to it. Borghild carried the drink round to the men.² She came to Sinfjotli with a large drinking horn and said :

'Now drink, stepson.'

He took the horn, peered in and said :

'The drink is cloudy.'

'Give it to me, then,' said Sigmund. He drank it off.

'Why should other people drink ale for you?' said the queen. She came a second time with the horn.

'Drink now,' she said, and roundly jeered at him. He grasped the horn and said : 'The drink has been tampered with.'

'Give it to me, then,' said Sigmund.

She came a third time and told him to drain the horn if he had the courage of the Volsungs. Sinfjotli grasped the horn and said : 'This drink has been poisoned.'

'Strain it through your moustache, my son,' exclaimed Sigmund in reply. The king was very drunk at the time, and that is why he spoke as he did. Sinfjotli drank and immediately collapsed. Sigmund rose to his feet, almost succumbing to his grief, and he took the body in his arms and went to the forest, and eventually came to a firth. There he saw a man³ in a small boat. The man asked if he wanted to be ferried across the firth. He said he did. The boat was so small that it would not hold them, and the body was taken first, Sigmund walking alongside the firth. The next instant the ship vanished from

Sigmundi skipit ok svá maðrinn.¹ Ok eptir þat snýr Sigmundur heim, rekr nú í brott drottningina, ok litlu síðar dó hon. Sigmundur konungr ræðr nú enn ríki sínu ok þykkir verit hafa inn mesti kappi ok konungr í fornum sið.

II

Eylimi^a hefir konungr heitit, ríkr ok ágætr. Dóttir hans hét Hjördís, allra kvenna vænst ok vitrust. Ok þat spyrr Sigmundur konungr at hon var við hans æði eða engi ella.

Sigmundur sækir heim Eylima konung. Hann gerir veizlu í mót honum mikla ef hann hefði eigi herferð þangat. Fara nú boð þeira í milli at með vinsemð var nú farit, en eigi með herskap. Veizla þessi var ger með inum beztum fongum ok með miklu fjölmenni. Sigmundi konungi var hvarvetna sett torg ok annarr farargreiði. Koma nú til veizlu ok skipa báðir konungar eina höll. Þar var ok kominn Lyngvi konungr, sonr Hundings konungs, ok vill hann ok mægjask við Eylima konung. Hann³ þykkisk sjá at þeir munu eigi hafa eitt ørendi, þykkisk ok vita at ófriðar mun af þeim ván er eigi fær.

Nú mælti konungr við dóttur sína, 'Þú ert vitr kona, en ek hefi þat mælt at þú skalt þér mann kjósa. Kjós nú um tvá konunga, ok er þat mitt ráð hér um sem þitt er.'

Hon svarar, 'Vant sýnisk mér þetta mál, en þó kys ek þann konung er frægstr er, en þat er Sigmundur konungr, þótt hann sé mjök aldri orpinn.'

Ok var hon honum gefin, en Lyngvi konungr fór í brott. Sigmundur kvángaðisk ok fekk Hjördísar. Var þar annan dag qðrum betr veitt eða með meira kappi. Eptir þat fór Sigmundur konungr heim í Húnaland ok Eylimi konungr, mágr hans, við honum ok gætir nú ríkis síns.

En Lyngvi konungr ok bræðr hans safna nú her at sér ok fara nú á hendr Sigmundi konungi, því at þeir höfðu jafnan minna hlut ór málum, þótt þetta biti nú fyrir. Vilja þeir nú fyrir koma kappi Völsunga. Koma nú í Húnaland ok senda Sigmundi konungi orð ok vilja eigi stelask á hann, en þykkjask^b vita at hann mun eigi flýja. Sigmundur

^a *The preceding ch. heading illeg. (also for Ol).*

^b *thus Ol, þykkisk V*

¹ It has been suggested (see Ellis, p. 44) that this episode is one of the indications for an earlier belief in a land of the dead across the sea. See, however, Introduction p. xxxv, n. 10.

² He is mentioned occasionally in *PE*, but nothing is known of him.

³ Presumably King Eylimi

Sigmund's sight, and with it the man.¹ After this Sigmund returned home and he now banished the queen, who soon afterwards died. King Sigmund now ruled his kingdom as before, and he is thought of as the greatest and most valiant king in heathen times.

II

There was a powerful and famous king named Eylimi.² His daughter's name was Hjordis. She was the best looking and the most intelligent woman there was. And King Sigmund heard that she and none other would suit him.

Sigmund now set out to visit King Eylimi, who prepared a great feast to welcome him, if his journey there was without hostile intent. Messages now passed between them to the effect that they came in friendship, and did not mean war. The feast was supplied with the best of everything, and a large number of people was there. Markets were provided for King Sigmund all along the route, and other amenities to help him on the journey. Thus they arrived at the feast, and the two kings shared the same hall. King Lyngvi, King Hunding's son, had also appeared, and he, too, would have liked to have King Eylimi as a father-in-law. He³ didn't imagine their mission would end in the same way for both of them, and he rather thought that the one who failed would very likely make trouble.

Then said the king to his daughter: 'You are an intelligent woman and I said that you should choose your own husband. So choose between the two kings, and your decision in the matter will be mine, too.'

'I don't find this easy,' she replied, 'but I'll choose the king who has the highest renown, and that is King Sigmund, even though he is well on in years.'

So it was to him she was given, and King Lyngvi went away. Sigmund married, taking Hjordis as his wife. Every day they were feasted better and with more zest than the day before. Afterwards King Sigmund returned to Hunland, and King Eylimi, his father-in-law, with him, and he saw to his kingdom.

But now King Lyngvi and his brothers gathered an army about them and moved against King Sigmund, for they had always had the worst of it, but this was the last straw. They now meant to dampen the ardour of the Volsungs. So they arrived in Hunland and sent word to King Sigmund, not wishing to take him by surprise, and being confident that he wouldn't run from them. King Sigmund said he would give battle.

konungur kvezk koma mundu til orrostu. Hann dró saman her, en Hjördís var ekit til skógar við eina ambátt, ok mikit fé fór með þeim. Hon var þar meðan þeir þorðusk.

Víkingar hljópu frá skipum við óvígjan her. Sigmundur konungur ok Eylimi settu upp merki sín ok var þá blásit í lúðra. Sigmundur konungur lætr nú við kveða sitt horn er faðir hans hafði átt, ok eggjar sína menn. Hafði Sigmundur lið miklu minna. Teksk þar nú hqrd orrosta, ok þótt Sigmundur væri gamall, þá barðisk hann nú hart ok var jafnan fremstr sinna manna. Helzk hvárki við honum skjoldr né brynja, ok gekk hann jafnan í gegnum lið óvina sinna á þeim degi, ok engi mátti sjá hversu fara mundi þeira í millum. Mart spjót var þar á lopti ok qrvar. En svá hlífðu honum hans spádísir¹ at hann varð ekki sárr, ok engi kunni töl hversu margr maðr fell fyrir honum. Hann hafði báðar hendr blóðgar til axlar.

Ok er orrosta^a hafði staðit um hríð, þá kom maðr² í bardagann með síðan hqtt ok hekle blá.³ Hann hafði eitt auga ok geir í hendi. Þessi maðr kom á mót Sigmundi konungi ok brá upp geirinum fyrir hann.^b Ok er Sigmundur konungur hjó fast, kom sverðit í geirinn ok brast í sundr í tvá hluti. Síðan sneri mannfallinu, ok váru Sigmundi konungi horfin heill, ok fell mjök liðit fyrir honum. Konungurinn hlífði sér ekki ok eggjar mjök liðit. Nú er sem mælt, at engi má við margnum.

12

Í^c þessi orrosta fell Sigmundur konungur ok Eylimi konungur, mágr hans, í qndverðri fylkingu ok mestr hluti liðs hans.

Lyngvi konungur sækir nú til konungsþæjarins ok ætlar at taka þar konungsdóttur, en þat brásk honum. Fekk hann þar hvárki konu né fé. Hann ferr nú yfir landit ok skipar þar sínum mōnnum ríkit. Þykkisk nú hafa drepit alla ætt Völsunga ok ætlar^d þá eigi munu þurfa^e at óttask heðan frá.

Hjördís gekk í valinn eptir orrostuna um nóttina ok kom at þar sem Sigmundur konungur lá, ok spyrr ef hann væri græðandi.

^a orrostan *B* ^b thus *Ol*, honum *V*

^c I and the preceding ch. heading are now illeg. *Ol* thought he could see traces of the initial I and made out . . . ok Eylima . . . gs, also *B* who first thought he could also make out fall Si . . .

^d Between ok and ætlar there is space for 8 or 9 letters of which traces seem visible. ^e thus *Ol*, þyfa *V*

¹ The Icelandic here has *spádísir*, beings that seem akin to both *norns* and *dísir* (see Glossary s.v. *dísir* and *nornir*).

He gathered together an army and Hjordis was driven over to the woods, accompanied by a bondwoman, and a large amount of treasure went with them. She was there throughout the fighting.

The vikings leaped from their ships in overwhelming numbers. King Sigmund and Eylimi raised their standards and the trumpets were sounded. And then Sigmund blew the horn that had been his father's, and urged on his men. Sigmund's force was smaller by far. Now a fierce battle began there, and Sigmund, old as he was, fought savagely and he was always in the forefront of his men. Neither shield nor coat of mail could stand against him, and on that day he constantly pierced clean through the ranks of his enemies, and no one could see how the fight between them would turn out. Numerous spears hurtled through the air, and arrows, too, but his horns¹ looked after him, so he remained unscathed, and no one kept count of the men who fell before him. Both his arms were bloody to the shoulders.

Now when the battle had gone on for some time, a man² who had on a black³ cloak and a hat coming down low over his face entered the fray. He had but one eye and in his hand he held a spear. The man advanced towards King Sigmund, raising the spear to bar his way, and when King Sigmund struck fiercely, his sword hit against the spear and snapped in two. After this the balance of the casualties shifted: King Sigmund's good luck had turned and his losses were heavy. The king gave no thought for himself, and he urged on his men hotly. The saying that 'numbers count' was now an apt one.

12

In this battle King Sigmund fell, as did his father-in-law, King Eylimi, at the head of his troops, along with the best part of his force.

King Lyngvi then paid a visit to the royal residence, expecting to find and seize the king's daughter, but in this he was thwarted. He found neither woman nor treasure there. Then he went through the country and shared out the land among his men. He now thought that he had wiped out the whole Volsung family, so he supposed that from then on there would be no cause for alarm.

The night after the battle, Hjordis went out to the men who had fallen, came to the spot where King Sigmund was lying, and asked if he could be made well again.

¹ Odin once again

³ Any colour in clothing is worth special mention since only men of rank could afford to wear anything better than the native undyed homespun.

En hann svarar, ' Margr lifnar ór litlum vánum, en horfin eru mér heill, svá at ek vil eigi^a láta græða mik. Vill Óðinn¹ ekki at vér bregðum sverði, síðan er nú brotnaði. Hefi ek haft orrostur meðan honum líkaði.'

Hon mælti, ' Enkis þætti mér ávant ef þú yrðir græddr ok hefndir feðr míns.'

Konungr segir, ' Qðrum er þat ætlat. Þú ferr með sveinbarn ok fæð þat vel ok vandliga, ok mun sá sveinn ágætr ok fremstr af várri ætt. Varðveit ok vel sverðsbrotin. Þar af má gera gott sverð er heita mun Gramr ok sonr okkarr mun bera ok þar mǫrg stórverk með vinna þau er aldri munu fyrnask,^b ok hans nafn mun uppi meðan veröldin stendr. Uni nú við þat, en mik mæða sár ok ek mun nú vitja frænda várra framgenginna.'

Hjórdís sitr nú yfir honum unz hann deyr, ok þá lýsir af degi. Hon sér at mǫrg skip eru komin við land.

Hon mælti til ambáttarinnar, ' Vit skulum skipta klæðum, ok skaltu nefnask nafni mínu ok segsk konungsdóttir.'

Ok þær gera svá.

Víkingar geta at líta mikit mannfall ok svá^c hvar konurnar fóru til skógar; skilja at stórtíðendum mun gegna, ok hlaupa af skipum. En fyrir þessu liði réð Álfr, sonr Hjálpreks² konungs af Danmǫrk. Hann hafði farit fyrir land fram með her sínum. Koma nú í valinn. Þar sjá þeir mikit mannfall. Konungrinn biðr nú at leita at^d konunum, ok svá gerðu þeir. Hann spyr hverjar þær væri, en þar^e skiptir eigi^f at líkendum til. Ambáttin hefir svǫr fyrir þeim ok segir fall Sigmundar konungs ok Eylima konungs ok margs annars stórmennis ok svá hverir gert hafa. Konungr spurði hvárt þær vissi hvar fé konungs væri folgit.

Ambáttin svarar, ' Meiri ván at vér vitim,' ok vísar til fjáris. Ok finna þeir auð mikinn, svá at eigi þóttusk menn sét hafa jafnmikit koma í einn stað eða fleiri gersimar. Bera til skipa Álfs konungs. Hjórdís

^a thus *Ol*, om. *V*

^b *V* adds meðan veröldin stendr, clearly a scribal deviation and here omitted as in earlier editions.

^c sa *V*, sjá *B*. *Ol* bases his svá on svá hverir gert hafa some lines farther on.

^d illeg. *V*

^e þat *B*

^f illeg. *V*

¹ Odin, god of war and of death, was the ruler of battles, either directly as here, or through his valkyries, and thus along with *Alfǫðr* (Allfather) with whom he became identified, and above the norms, the supreme arbiter of men's fate. Yet even Odin is doomed (see p. 39, n. 2) and Sigmund now joins the other heroes, the *Einherjar*, whom Odin gathers in Valhall against the day of his last desperate battle.

² This is the Norse equivalent of Chilperic. There were two Merovingian rulers of this name; the first was the historical Brynhild's brother-in-law who

‘Many have recovered when there was little hope,’ he answered, ‘but my good luck has turned and so I do not wish to be made well. Odin¹ does not want me to draw sword, for now it lies broken. I have fought battles while it was his pleasure.’

‘I should think,’ she said, ‘that nothing would be lacking if you were made well and avenged my father.’

‘That is left for others,’ said the king. ‘You are with child—a boy. Give him a good and careful upbringing—the boy shall be famous and the foremost of our house. Look after the pieces of the sword as well. A fine sword can be made from them—it will be called Gram, and our son will bear it and perform many great deeds with it, deeds which shall never be forgotten, and his name shall live as long as the world endures. Now be content with that. But my wounds are troubling me, and I shall now go to join our kinsmen who have gone before.’

Then Hjordis watched over him until he died, and then dawn came. She saw that a good many ships had put in to the shore.

‘We’ll exchange clothes,’ she said to the bondwoman, ‘and you call yourself by my name and say you are the king’s daughter.’

And this is what they did.

The vikings saw the carnage and also saw the women making for the woods, and they realised that something of great moment must have occurred, and they sprang from the boats. Alf, son of Hjalprek,² King of Denmark, was in command of the force. He had been sailing along the coast with his army. They now came to the place of battle. They saw the carnage there. The king now commanded that the women should be looked for and found, and this they did. He asked the women who they were, and then an unlikely thing happened: the ‘bondwoman’ answered for them and told how King Sigmund had fallen in battle, along with King Eylimi and many other high-ranking men, and told also who had done this thing. The king asked whether they knew where the king’s treasure was hidden.

‘It would seem rather likely we’d know that,’ answered the ‘bondwoman’, and she showed the way to the treasure. They found a vast amount of wealth, so much so that they did not believe they had ever seen so much collected together in one place, or a larger number of precious things. They carried it to King Alf’s ships. Hjordis went

died in 584. As the father of Alf, Sigurd’s stepfather, he may provide a link between Sigurd and Merovingian history (see Introduction pp. xxiii and xxxiii). His son Alf is probably the Half with whom Gudrun takes refuge after Sigurd’s death (pp. 62 f.).

fylgði honum ok svá ambáttin. Hann ferr nú heim í ríki sitt en lætr at þar sé fallnir þeir konungar er frægstir váru.

Konungr sezkr við stjórn, en þær sátu í fyrirrúmi á skipinu. Hann á tal við þær ok leggr virðing á ræður þeira.

Konungr kom heim í ríki sitt við miklu fé. Álfr var manna gerviligastr. Ok er þau hafa skamma stund heima verit, spyrr dróttningin Álf, son sinn,

‘Hví hefir in fegri kona færi hringa eða verra búnað? Ok virðisk mér at sú muni æðri er þér hafið minna yfir látit.’^a

Hann svarar, ‘Grunat hefir mik þat at eigi sé ambáttarmót á henni, ok þá er vér fundumk, þá tóksk henni vel at fagna tignum mǫnnum, ok hér til skal gera eina raun.’

Þat er nú eitt sinn við drykkju at konungr sezkr á tal við þær ok mælti, ‘Hvat hafi þér at marki um dægfar, þá er nótt eldir, ef þér sjáið eigi himintungl?’

Hon svarar, ‘Þat mark höfum vér hér til at ek var því vǫn í æsku at drekka mjök í óttu, ok er ek lét af því, vǫknuðu vér eptir því síðan, ok er þat mitt mark.’

Konungr brosti at ok mælti, ‘Illa var konungsdóttir vǫnd.’

Hann^b hittir þá Hjǫrdísi ok spyrr hana slíks ins sama.

Hon svarar honum,^c ‘Faðir minn gaf mér eitt gull lítit við nátturu. Þat^d kólnar í óttu á fingri^e mér. Þat er mitt mark hér um.’

Konungr svarar, ‘Gnótt var þar gulls er ambáttir báru, ok munu þér ærit lengi leynzk hafa fyrir mér, ok svá munda^f ek til þín gert hafa sem vit værim eins konungs börn bæði, þóttu hefðir þetta sagt, ok enn skal gera verðleikum betr við þik, því at þú skalt vera mín kona, ok skal ek gjalda mund við þér, þá er þú hefir barn getit.’

Hon svarar ok segir allt it sanna um sitt ráð. Er hon þar nú í miklum sóma ok þykkir in virðuligasta kona.

Þat^g er nú sagt at Hjǫrdís fæðir sveinbarn, ok er sveinninn færðr Hjálpreki konungi. Konungrinn varð glaðr við er hann sá þau in hvössu augu er hann bar í höfði, ok sagði hann engum mundu líkan

^a thus *Ol*, lát *V*

^b illeg. *V*

^c illeg. *V*

^d *B* emends to þá, at deleting the stop after nátturu.

^e illeg. *V*

^f illeg. *V*

^g The preceding ch. heading is blurred to illegibility. *Ol* reads Fæðr Sigurðr.

along with him, and so did the bondwoman. He now returned to his kingdom, where he announced that the most famous kings of all had fallen in that place.

The king sat down at the helm and the women sat on the first bench. He conversed with them and what they said met with his approval.

The king arrived back in his country with a large amount of treasure. Alf was a most capable man. And when they had been back for a short time, the queen asked her son, Alf, this :

‘Why is it that the better-looking woman has fewer rings and poorer clothes ? I think that the one you have made less of is really the higher.’

‘I suspected that her manner was not that of a bondwoman,’ he answered, ‘and when we met she knew well how to receive men of noble rank, and I’ll put it to the test.’

So once when they were drinking the king sat down to talk to them. ‘What tells you that dawn has come, if you can’t see moon, stars or sun ?’ he said.

‘I can tell because when I was small I used to have a deep drink just before daybreak,’ she answered, ‘and after I left off doing this, I went on waking up as usual, and that’s how I can tell.’

The king smiled at this. ‘That was a poor upbringing for a princess,’ he said.

Then he went to Hjordis and asked her the same question.

‘My father gave me a little gold ring which has a strange power,’ she answered him. ‘Just before daybreak it grows cold on my finger. That is how I can tell.’

‘There was plenty of gold about if bondwomen wore it,’ answered the king, ‘and you’ve concealed your identity from me quite long enough, but I’d have treated you as if the two of us were the children of the same king, if you had spoken, and I shall treat you even better than that, for you shall be my wife and I shall pay the marriage settlement, when you have borne a child.’

She answered and told the whole truth about her circumstances. She was now held in great honour there and was thought a most noteworthy woman.

The saga now tells how Hjordis gave birth to a son, and the boy was brought to King Hjalprek. The king was glad when he saw the keen eyes he had in his head, and said that no one would be like him or a

verða eða samjafnan, ok var hann vatni ausinn¹ með Sigurðar nafni. Frá honum segja allir eitt, at um atferð ok vøxt var engi hans maki. Hann var þar fæddr með Hjálpreki konungi af mikilli ást. Ok þá er nefndir eru allir inir ágæztu menn ok konungar í fornsögum,^a þá skal Sigurðr fyrir ganga um afl ok atgervi, kapp ok hreysti^b er hann hefir haft um hvern mann fram annarra í norðrálfu heimsins.^c Sigurðr óx þar upp með Hjálpreki, ok unni hvert barn honum. Hann fastnaði Álfu konungi Hjörðísi ok mælti henni mund.

Reginn² hét fóstri³ Sigurðar ok var Hreiðmars sonr. Hann kenndi honum íþróttir, tafl⁴ ok rúnar ok tungur margar at mæla sem þá var títt konungasonum, ok marga hluti aðra. Eitt sinn spurði Reginn Sigurð, er þeir váru báðir saman, ef hann vissi hversu mikit fé faðir hans hefði átt eða hverir þat varðveittu. Sigurðr svarar ok segir at konungar varðveittu.

Reginn mælti, 'Trúir þú þeim allvel ?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þat samir at þeir varðveiti þar til er oss hallkvæmisk, því at þeir kunnu betr at gæta en ek.'

Annat sinni^d kemr Reginn at máli við Sigurð ok mælti, 'Kynligt er þat er þú vilt vera hestasveinn konunga eða fara sem hlauparar.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi er þat, því at vér ráðum öllu með þeim. Er oss ok heimult þat er vér viljum hafa.'

Reginn mælti, 'Bið hann gefa þér einn hest.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þegar mun þat er ek vil.'

Sigurðr hittir nú konunga. Þá mælti konungr við Sigurð,

'Hvat viltu af oss þiggja ?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Einn hest viljum vér þiggja oss til skemtanar.'

Konungrinn mælti, 'Kjós þér sjálfr hest ok slíkt er þú vill hafa af várri eigu.'

Annan dag eptir fór Sigurðr til skógar ok mætir einum gömlum manni með síðu skeggi. Sá var honum ókunnigr. Hann spyr hvert Sigurðr skyldi fara.

Hann svarar, 'Hest skyldum vér kjósa. Ráð um með oss.'

Hann mælti, 'Förum ok rekum til árinna er Busiltjörn heitir.'

^a fornum sögum *B. n of forn- now illeg.*

^b -ti *illeg. V*

^c -ns *illeg. V*

^d sinn *B*

¹ See Glossary s.v. *nafnfestr*

² See Introduction p. xxviii

³ See p. 2, n. 1

⁴ The Icelandic word *tafl* is a name applied to more than one board game. The writer of the saga might have thought of it as chess, which was not known

match for him, and he was sprinkled with water¹ and named Sigurd. Everyone says the same thing about him: in energy and stature none was his peer. He was brought up there in King Hjalprek's household with great affection. And when all the most famous men and kings in ancient tales are mentioned, it is Sigurd who must come first in strength and ability, in eagerness and courage, of which he had far more than any other man in Europe. Sigurd grew up there in King Hjalprek's household, and everyone loved him. He it was who betrothed Hjordis to King Alf and fixed the settlement for her.

Regin² was the name of Sigurd's foster-father,³ and he was Hreidmar's son. He taught him various accomplishments, chequers,⁴ runes, and also how to speak many languages, as was then customary for princes, and much else besides. Once when the two were together, Regin asked Sigurd if he knew how much wealth his father had possessed and who the people were that looked after it. Sigurd answered saying that the kings were looking after it.

'Do you altogether trust them?' said Regin.

'It is right,' answered Sigurd, 'that they should look after it until it will be of use to me, for they are better able to guard it than I am.'

Regin came a second time to talk to Sigurd and said:

'It's odd that you're willing to be a horse-boy for kings and to go around like a runagate.'

'That's not so,' replied Sigurd, 'for I have my say with them in everything, and anything I want is at my disposal.'

'Tell him to give you a horse,' said Regin.

'He'll give it me the moment I want it,' replied Sigurd.

Sigurd then went to visit the kings. Then a king said to Sigurd:

'What do you want from us?'

'I want a horse for my sport,' Sigurd answered.

'Pick out a horse yourself,' said the king, 'and anything of ours you may want.'

The following day Sigurd went to the woods and came across an old man with a long beard, a man he didn't know. He asked where Sigurd was going.

'I was going to choose a horse,' he replied. 'Give me some advice about it.'

'Let us go and drive them to the river Busiltjorn,' he said.

in Iceland before the twelfth century. It may well have been the ancient game of *hneftafl* described in *Friðbjófs saga*, ch. 3, in which one of the players defends the *hnefi* (literally 'fist') with the red pieces, the other attacking with the white. (See C. Tolkien, *The Saga of King Heidrek*, 1960, Appendix D.)

Þeir reka hrossin út á djúp árinna, ok leggjask at landi nema einn hestr. Hann tók Sigurðr. Hann var grár at lit ok ungr at aldri, mikill vexti ok vænn. Engi hafði honum á bak komit. Skeggmaðrinn mælti, 'Þessi hestr er kominn frá Sleipni,¹ ok skal hann vandliga upp fæða, því at hann verðr hverjum hesti betri.'

Maðrinn hverfr þá. Sigurðr kallar hestinn Grana, ok hefir sá hestr beztr verit. Óðinn hafði hann hittan.

Enn mælti Reginn til Sigurðar, 'Of lítit fé eigu þér. Þat harmar oss er þér hlaupið sem þorpara sveinar, en ek veit mikla féván at segja þér, ok er þat meiri ván at þat sé sómi at sækja ok virðing, ef þú næðir.'

Sigurðr spyr hvar væri eða hverr varðveitti.

Reginn svarar, 'Sá heitir Fáfni² er hér liggir skammt heðan á brott. Þat heitir Gnitahiðr.³ Ok er þú kemr þar, þá muntu þat mæla: Aldri sáttu meira fé í gulli í einum stað, ok eigi þarftu meira, þóttu verðir allra konunga elztr ok frægstr.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Kann ek kyn þessa orms, þótt vér sém ungr, ok hefi ek spurt at engi þorir at koma á mót honum fyrir vaxtar sakir ok illsku.'

Reginn svarar, 'Þat er ekki. Sá vöxtr er eptir hætti lyngorma, ok er gert af miklu meira en er, ok svá mundi þótt hafa inum fyrrum frændum þínum. Ok þótt Völsunga ætt sé at þér, þá mun þú eigi hafa þeira skaplyndi er fyrst eru talðir til alls frama.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Vera má at eigi hofum vér mikit af þeira kappi eða snilld, en eigi berr nauðsyn til at frýja oss, er vér erum^a enn lítt af barnsaldri. Eða hví eggjar þú þessa svá mjök?'

Reginn svarar, 'Saga er til þess, ok mun ek segja þér.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Lát mik heyra.'

14

'Þat^b er upphaf^c sögu þessar at Hreiðmarr hét faðir minn, mikill ok auðigr. Sonr hans hét Fáfni, en annarr hét Otr, ok var ek inn þriði,

^a thus *Ol*, om. *V*

^b No trace of a preceding ch. heading. *Ol* thought there may never have been one.

^c thus *Ol*, -haf om. *V*

¹ Sleipnir was Odin's eight-footed steed. Snorri (Jónsson, *SnE*, 65 f.) tells how Loki turned himself into a mare in order to hinder a giant from claiming his reward for completing a stronghold for the Æsir on time by enticing away the great horse that was essential to his labours, and how he eventually gave birth to Sleipnir as a result.

They drove the horses out into the deep part of the river, and all swam to the shore except one. That was the one Sigurd took. He was grey in colour, young, large, and a handsome horse. No one had ever mounted him. The man with the beard spoke :

‘ This horse is sired by Sleipnir.¹ He must be carefully reared for he’ll turn out better than any other horse.’

Thereupon the man vanished. Sigurd called the horse Grani—that horse was the best ever. The man who had met him was Odin.

Regin again spoke to Sigurd :

‘ You’ve too little wealth. It annoys me to see you running around like a peasant lad. But I can tell you where great wealth is likely to be found, and in all probability there’s honour to be had, and fame, too, should you win it.’

Sigurd asked where it was and who was guarding it.

‘ His name is Fafnir,’² answered Regin, ‘ and he’s lying but a short distance away. The place is called Gnitahaid.³ And when you get there you will say that you have never seen a greater hoard of gold in any one place. And you’ll not need more, even if you become the most senior and most renowned of all kings.’

‘ Even though I’m young,’ replied Sigurd, ‘ I know what that dragon’s like, and I’ve heard that no one dares to face him because of his size and malignity.’

‘ That’s not so,’ answered Regin. ‘ His size is the usual for serpents, and it’s been made out to be far greater than it actually is, and that’s what your ancestors would have thought, but even though you are of the Volsung line, you’ll scarcely have the Volsung temperament—in courage they’re reckoned second to none.’

‘ Perhaps I’ve not got much of their energy or ability,’ replied Sigurd. ‘ But there’s no need to find fault with me, seeing that I’m hardly more than a child. Why are you so very keen on this business ? ’

‘ There’s a story behind it,’ replied Regin, ‘ and I’ll tell it you.’

‘ Let me hear it,’ said Sigurd.

14

‘ The story begins with my father whose name was Hreidmar, an important and wealthy man. His son’s name was Fafnir, a second son

² For the dragon and its treasure see Introduction pp. xxvii f.

³ Several scholars who hold the theory that Sigurd was historically Arminius (see Introduction pp. xxxiii f.) identify Gnitahaid as Knetterheide, a heath between Minden and Paderborn, not far from the Teutoburger Wald.

ok var ek minnstr fyrir mér um atgervi ok yfirlát. Kunna ek af járnri gera ok af silfri ok gulli, ok hverjum hlut gerða ek nokkut nýtt. Otr, bróðir minn, hafði aðra iðn ok náttúru. Hann var veiðimaðr mikill ok um fram aðra menn ok var í otrs líki um daga ok var jafnan í ánni ok bar upp fiska með munni sér. Veiðiföngin færði hann feðr sínum, ok var honum þat mikill styrkr. Mjök hefir hann otrs líki á sér, kom síð heim ok át blundandi ok einn saman, því at hann mátti eigi sjá at þyrri. Fáfnir var miklu mestr ok grimmastr ok vildi sitt eitt kalla láta allt þat er var.

‘Einn dvergr¹ hét Andvari,’ segir Reginn. ‘Hann var jafnan í forsinum, er Andvarafors heitir, í geddu líki ok fekk sér þar matar, því at þar var fjöldi fiska í þeim forsi. Otr, bróðir minn, fór jafnan í þenna fors ok bar upp fiska í munni sér ok lagði einn senn á land.

‘Óðinn, Loki,² Hœnir³ fóru leiðar sinnar ok kómu til Andvarafors. Otr hafði þá tekit einn lax ok át blundandi á árbakkanum. Loki tók einn stein ok laust otrinn til bana. Æsir⁴ þóttusk mjök heppnir af veiði sinni ok flógu belg af otrinum.

‘Þat kveld kómu þeir til Hreiðmars ok sýndu honum veiðina. Þá tóku vér þá höndum ok soggðum⁵ á þá gjald ok fjörlausn at þeir fyldi belginn af gulli ok hylði hann útan með rauðu gulli. Þá sendu þeir Loka at afla gullsins. Hann kom til Ránar⁶ ok fekk net hennar, fór þá til Andvarafors ok kastaði netinu fyrir gedduna, en hon hljóp í netit. Þá mælti Loki,

(2) Hvat er þat fiska
er rennr flóði í,
kannat sér við víti varask?
Höfuð þitt leystu
helju⁶ ór
ok finn mér lindar⁷ loga.⁷

(3) Andvari ek heiti,
Óðinn^c hét minn faðir,

^a *B emends to loğðum.*

^b *thus Ol, lionar V CR. Neckel emends to lindar.*

^c *mistake for Óinn (CR)*

¹ See Glossary s.v. *dvergar*

² The trouble-maker among the gods who varies between being an outright enemy and a comparatively harmless rascal.

³ He appears along with Odin and Loki in a number of tales. The Æsir sent him as a hostage to the Vanir on the conclusion of peace between them.

⁴ All the chief gods of the Northern pantheon were called Æsir (sing. *Áss*).

⁵ The wife of Ægir the sea giant, and ruler of an underworld beneath the

was called Otr, and I was the third, the least gifted and made least of. I could fashion things in iron, in silver and gold, too, and I could make something useful out of anything. My brother Otr's work and bent were different. He was a great fisherman, far more expert than others, and during the day he assumed the shape of an otter and was always in the river, bringing up fish with his mouth. What he caught he brought to his father, and this was a great help to him. He had many of the characteristics of an otter, he came home late, eating alone and with his eyes shut, for he couldn't bear to watch it growing less. Fafnir was by far the biggest and fiercest, and he wanted everything to be called his.

'There was a dwarf¹ whose name was Andvari,' said Regin. 'He was always in a waterfall known as the Andvari Falls in the semblance of a pike, and he got food there for himself, for there was a very large number of fish in the falls. My brother Otr always used to go into these falls and would bring up fish in his mouth and lay them on the bank one by one.

'Odin, Loki² and Hænir³ were journeying along, and they came to the Andvari Falls. Otr had just caught a salmon and was eating it with his eyes shut on the river bank. Loki took up a stone, struck the otter and killed him. The Æsir⁴ thought they were very lucky in their hunting and they skinned the otter.

'That evening they came to Hreidmar's house and showed him what they had caught. Then we laid hands on them, and by way of compensation and ransom we stipulated that they should fill the skin with gold, and cover it up on the outside with red gold. So they sent Loki to get the gold. He went to Ran,⁵ got her net, and then went to the Andvari Falls, cast the net in front of the pike, and it ran into the net. Then Loki said :

(2) What fish is this
that swims in the flood,
and from punishment knows no protection ?
Ransom your head
out from Hel⁶
and of Linden find me flame.⁷

(3) Andvari's my name,
Odin my father's,

waves. She had a net with which she drew down all those who were drowned at sea to dwell in her domain (see Jónsson, *SnE* 151 f.).

⁶ See Glossary s.v. *Hel*

⁷ A kenning for 'gold'

margan hefi ek fors of farit.
 Aumlig norn
 skóp oss í árdaga,
 at ek skylda í vatni vaða.

‘Loki sér gull þat er Andvari átti. En er hann hafði fram reitt gullit, þá hafði hann eptir ^a einn hring, ok tók Loki hann af honum. Dvergrinn gekk í steininn ok mælti at hverjum skyldi at bana verða er þann gullhring ætti ok svá allt gullit.

‘Æsirnir reiddu Hreiðmari féit ok tráðu upp otrbelginn ok settu á fætr. Þá skyldu Æsirnir hlaða upp hjá gullinu ok hylja útan. En er þat var gert, þá gekk Hreiðmarr fram ok sá eitt granahár ok bað hylja. Þá dró Óðinn hringinn af hendi sér, Andvaranaut,¹ ok hulði hárit. Þá kvað Loki,

(4) Gull er þér nú reitt,
 en þú gjöld hefir
 mikil míns hqfuðs.
 Syni þínum verðrat
 sæla sköpuð,
 þat er ykkarr beggja bani.

‘Síðan drap Fáfñir fōður sinn,’ segir Reginn, ‘ok myrði² hann, ok náða ek engu af fénu. Hann gerðisk svá illr at hann lagðisk út ok unni engum at njóta fjárins nema sér ok varð síðan at inum versta ormi og ligr nú á því fé. Síðan fór ek til konungs ok gerðumk ek smiðr hans. Ok er þessi ræða til minnar sögu at ek missi fōðurarfsins ok bróðurgjaldanna. Gullit er síðan kallat otrsgjöld ok hér dæmi af tekin.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Mikit hefir þú látit, ok stóráillir hafa þínir frændr verit.’

15

‘Ger^b nú eitt sverð af þínum hagleik, þat er ekki sé jafngott gert ok ek mega vinna stórverk, ef hugr dugir, ef þú vill at ek drepa þenna inn mikla dreka.’

^a thus *Ol*, *CR*; *om. V*

^b *Preceding ch. heading reads* Reginn gerði Gram.

¹ An object is called the *nautr* of the person from whom it comes, whether it be as a gift or even as booty (see Cleasby-Vigfusson s.v. *nautr*). The derivation of the name Andvari is uncertain; it is probably not the same word as *andvari*, ‘fear’.

² See Glossary s.v. *morð*

over many a fall I have fared.
 A dismal Norn
 decreed in days of yore
 that I should wade in water.

Loki saw the gold that was Andvari's. And when he proffered the gold, he kept back one ring, but Loki took it from him. The dwarf went into the rock and said that to possess the ring, or any of the gold, meant death.

'The Æsir handed over the treasure to Hreidmar, stuffed the otterskin full and set it on its feet. Then the Æsir had to pile the gold alongside and cover it up. When that was completed, Hreidmar went up and saw a single whisker, and told them to cover that. Then Odin drew the ring Andvaranaut¹ from his arm and covered up the hair. Then Loki spoke :

(4) Gold is now rendered,
 recompense for you,
 much for my head.
 'Tis not luck will be
 the lot of your son :
 Death to you both it brings.

Later on Fafnir killed his father,' said Regin, 'hiding his murdered body,² and I didn't get any of the treasure. He grew so malevolent that he went off to live in the wilds and allowed none but himself to have any pleasure in the riches, and later on he turned into a terrible dragon and now he lies on the treasure. Afterwards I went to the king and became his smith. And the upshot of my story is that I'm left without patrimony or compensation for my brother. Since then gold has been called "Payment for Otr", and that is the reason why.'

'You've lost a great deal,' answered Sigurd, 'and your family has been very evil.'

'Now use your skill to make such a fine sword that no other sword can be made to equal it, and so that I shall be able to perform great deeds, if my courage serves—should you want me to kill this great dragon.'

Reginn segir, ' Þat geri ek með trausti, ok muntu mega drepa Fáfni með því sverði.'

Reginn gerir nú eitt sverð ok fær í hönd Sigurði. Hann tók við sverðinu ok mælti,

' Þetta er þitt ^a smíði, Reginn,' ok hæggr í steðjann, ok brotnaði sverðit. Hann kastar brandinum ok bað hann smíða annat betra. Reginn gerir annat sverð ^b ok fær Sigurði. Hann leit á.

' Þetta mun þér líka, en vant mun yðr at smíða.'

Sigurðr reynir þetta sverð ok brýtr sem it fyrra. Þá mælti Sigurðr til Regins,

' Þú munt líkr vera inum fyrrum frændum þínum ok vera ótrúr.' Gekk nú til móður sinnar. Hon fagnar honum vel. Talask nú við ok drekka.

Þá mælti Sigurðr, ' Hvárt höfum vér rétt til spurt at Sigmundur konungr seldi yðr sverðit Gram í tveim hlutum?'

Hon svarar, ' Satt er þat.'

Sigurðr mælti, ' Fá mér í hönd, ek vil hafa.'

Hon kvað hann líkligan til frama ok fær honum sverðit. Sigurðr hittir nú Regin ok bað hann þar gera af sverð eptir efnum. Reginn reiddisk ok gekk til smíðju með sverðsbrotin ok þykkir Sigurðr framgjarn um smíðina.

Reginn gerir nú eitt sverð. Ok er hann bar ór aflinum, sýndisk smíðjusveinum sem eldar brynni ór eggjunum. Biðr nú Sigurð við taka sverðinu ok kvezk eigi kunna sverð at gera ef þetta bilar. Sigurðr hjó í steðjann ok klauf niðr í fótinn, ok brast eigi né brotnaði. Hann lofaði sverðit mjök ok fór til árinna með ullarlagð ok kastar í gegn straumi, ok tók í sundr er hann brá við sverðinu. Gekk Sigurðr þá glaðr heim.

Reginn mælti, ' Efna muni þér heit yður nú er ek hefi gert sverðit, ok hitta Fáfni.'

Sigurðr svarar, ' Efna munu vér ok þó annat fyrr, at hefna fõður míns.'

Sigurðr varð því ástsælli, sem hann var ellri, af qllu fólki, svá at hvert barn unni honum hugástum.

^a *B emends to ilt.*

^b *thus Ol, sverðit V*

‘ I shall make it with confidence,’ said Regin. ‘ With that sword you’ll be able to kill Fafnir.’

So Regin made a sword and placed it in Sigurd’s hands. He grasped the sword.

‘ This is what your work’s like, Regin,’ he said, striking at the anvil—and the sword broke. He flung away the blade and told him to forge a second and better one. Regin made a second sword and brought it to Sigurd. He examined it.

‘ You’ll be pleased with this one, though you’re not an easy man to work metal for.’

Sigurd tried out the sword, and broke it just like the first. Then Sigurd said to Regin :

‘ You’re like your forebears—untrustworthy.’ He now went to his mother. She made him welcome, and they talked and drank together.

‘ Is what I’ve heard true ? ’ said Sigurd then. ‘ Did King Sigmund entrust you with the sword Gram, in two pieces ? ’

‘ That is so,’ she replied.

‘ Let me have them,’ said Sigurd. ‘ I want them.’

She said he seemed likely to win fame, and brought him the sword. Sigurd then sought out Regin and told him to fashion a sword from them to the best of his ability. Regin got angry and went to the smithy with the pieces of the sword, thinking that Sigurd was very exacting when it came to forging.

Then Regin made a sword. And when he drew it from the furnace, it seemed to the lads working in the smithy as if the edges were all aflame. He next told Sigurd to take the sword, saying that if this one failed, then he didn’t know how to make a sword. He struck at the anvil and cleft it right down to its base, and the sword neither shattered nor snapped. He praised the sword highly and went down to the river, taking along a tuft of wool which he threw in against the stream, and it was sliced through when he held the sword against it. So Sigurd went back happy.

‘ You’ll keep your promise,’ said Regin, ‘ now that I’ve made the sword, and seek out Fafnir.’

‘ I shall keep it,’ replies Sigurd. ‘ But first there’s something else—vengeance for my father ! ’

The older Sigurd grew, the more popular he was with everybody, so much so that one and all loved him dearly.

16

Grípír ^a hét maðr ok var móðurbróðir ¹ Sigurðar. En litlu síðar en sverðit var gert, fór hann á fund Grípís, því at hann var framvísst ok vissi fyrir ørlög manna. Sigurðr leitar eptir hversu ganga mun ævi hans. En hann var þó lengi fyrir ok sagði þó loksins við ákafliga bæn Sigurðar qll forlög hans, eptir því sem eptir gekk síðan.

Ok þá er Grípír hafði þessa hluti sagða sem hann beiddi, þá reið hann heim. Ok brátt eptir þat finnask þeir Reginn. Þá mælti hann, 'Drep Fáfni sem þér hétuð.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Gera skal þat ok þó annat fyrr, at hefna Sigmundar konungs ok annarra frænda várra er þar fellu í þeiri orrostu.'

17

Nú ^b hittir Sigurðr konunga ok mælti til þeira,

'Hér höfum vér verit um hríð ok eigum vér yðr ástsemð at launa ok mikla virðing. En nú viljum vér ór landi fara ok finna Hundings sonu, ok vilda ek at þeir vissi at Völsungar væri eigi allir dauðir. Viljum vér hafa þar til yðarn styrk.'

Konungar kváðusk allt vilja til fá þat er hann beiddisk.

Er nú búit lið mikit ok allt vandat sem mest, skip ok allr herbúnaðr, svá at hans ferð væri þá vegligri en áðr. Sigurðr stýrir dreka ² þeim er mestr var ok ágætligastr. Segl þeira váru mjök vönduð ok ítarlig at sjá. Sigla þeir nú góðan byr.

Ok er fá dægr váru liðin, þá kom á veðr mikit með stormi, en svá var sjárin sem í roðru sæi. Eigi bað Sigurðr svipta seglumum þótt rifnuðu, heldr bað hann hæra setja en áðr.

Ok er þeir sigldu fram fyrir bergnos nokkura, þá kallaði maðr upp á skipit ok spyrr hvern fyrir liðinu eigi at ráða. Honum var sagt at þar var höfðingi Sigurðr Sigmundarson er nú er frægstr ungra manna.

Maðrinn svarar, 'Allir segja þar eitt frá honum, at eigi megi

^a *The preceding ch. heading is illeg. Ol made out Sigurðr varð (?) vis (?) [ør]lög sn (?)*.

^b *The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurðr drap Lyngva ok Hjörvarð ok þá alla . . .*

¹ From the earliest times the mother's brother seems to have been an especially important kinsman. (See Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 20.)

² *dreki*, literally 'dragon', was frequently used of ships whose prow was shaped to resemble a dragon.

16

There was a man named Gripir who was Sigurd's uncle on his mother's side,¹ and soon after the sword was made he went to visit Gripir, because he had the gift of second sight and knew in advance what a man's fate would be. Sigurd asked about his own life and how it would turn out. However, for a long time he was unwilling, but at Sigurd's urgent entreaty he finally told him his entire destiny, just as it afterwards came to pass.

And when Gripir had told him of these matters as he had been asked, Sigurd rode home. And shortly after that he and Regin met. Then Regin said :

'Kill Fafnir as you promised.' And Sigurd answered :

'I'll do so, but first there's something else—vengeance for King Sigmund and the other kinsmen of ours who fell in that battle.'

17

Sigurd now paid a visit to the kings :

'I've been here for some time, and I stand in your debt for the affection and high honour shown me,' he said to them. 'But now I mean to leave the country and find Hunding's sons : I want them to know that not all the Volsungs are dead. I'd like your help in this.'

They said they'd get him everything he asked for.

A large force was now made ready and everything prepared as carefully as possible, ships and all the military equipment, so that his whole expedition was more resplendent than would have otherwise been the case. Sigurd captained the largest and finest of the warships.² Great pains had been taken with the sails, and they made a wonderful sight. They now sailed on a favourable breeze.

But when only a few days had elapsed, a violent storm of wind came up, and the sea looked bathed in gore. Sigurd gave no command to reef the sails, even though they were ripping, but instead ordered them to be hoisted higher than before.

Now as they sailed by a certain promontory, a man shouted up to the ship, asking who was in command. He was told that their chief was Sigurd Sigmundarson—now the most famous of all young men.

'As for that, everyone says the same of him,' replied the man,

konungasynir jafnask við hann. Vilda ek at þér felldið seglin á nokkuru skipinu ok tæki þér við mér.’

Þeir spurðu hann at nafni. Hann svarar,

(5) Hnikarr hétu mik,
þá er ek Hugin gladda,
Völsungr ungi,
ok vegit hafða.
Nú máttu kalla
karl af bjargi
Feng eða Fjölni.
Far vil ek þiggja.¹

Þeir viku at landi ok tóku karl á skip sín. Þá tók af veðrit, ok fara unz þeir koma at landi í ríki Hundings sona. Þá hvarf Fjölnir.

Þeir láta þegar geisa eld ok járn, drepa menn, en brenna bygðina ok eyða þar sem þeir fara. Stækkr fjöldi undan á fund Lyngva konungs, ok segja at herr er kominn í landit ok ferr með meira geysingi en dæmi finnisk til. Kváðu Hundings sonu eigi langsýna, þá er þeir soggusk eigi mundu hræðask Völsunga,—

‘En nú stýrir þessum her Sigurðr Sigmundarson.’

Lyngvi konungr lætr nú fara um allt sitt ríki herboð; vill eigi á flóttu leggjask, stefnir til sín öllum þeim mönnum er honum vilja lið veita. Kemr nú á mót Sigurði með allmikinn her ok bræðr hans með honum.

Teksk þar in harðasta orrosta með þeim. Mátti þar á lopti sjá mart spjót ok orvar margar, øxi hart reidda, skjöldu klofna ok brynjur slitnar, hjálma skýfða, hausa klofna ok margan mann steypask til jarðar.

Ok er orrostan hefir svá staðit mjök langa hríð, sækir Sigurðr fram um merkin ok hefir í hendi sverðit Gram. Hann hæggr bæði menn ok hesta ok gengr í gegnum fylkingar ok hefir báðar hendr blóðgar til axlar, ok stökk undan fólk þar sem hann fór, ok helzk hvárki við hjálmr né brynja, ok engi maðr þóttisk fyrr sét hafa þvílíkan mann. Þessi orrosta stóð lengi með miklu mannfalli ok ákafri sókn. Ferr þar, sem sjaldnar kann henda, þá er landherrinn sækir til, at þat kom fyrir ekki. Fell þar svá mart fyrir Hundings sonum at engi maðr vissi töl á. Ok ^a

^a B adds *er*, with a comma after fylkingu.

¹ It is Odin who is speaking. Hugin and Munin, two ravens, were Odin's faithful companions. Odin sent them out at daybreak to fly over all the world, and on their return they sat on his shoulders and whispered to him all they had heard and seen. Their names imply 'thought' and 'memory' respectively.

' that no prince can call himself his equal. Please lower sail on one of your ships and take me on board.'

They asked him his name. He replied :

(5) Hnikar they called me
 when Hugin I gladdened,
 vanquished and slew,
 O Volsung youth !
 The man from the cliff
 call by the name
 of Feng or Fjolnir,
 I would fare hence with you.¹

They put into land and took the man on board ship. Then the storm abated, and they sailed until they reached land in the kingdom of Hunding's sons. Then Fjolnir vanished.

Immediately they let loose a riot of fire and slaughter. They killed, they burnt down settlements, and wherever they went they laid waste. A good number fled to King Lyngvi and told him that a hostile army had entered the country, and that the violence of their passage was unheard of. They said that Hunding's sons hadn't been very far-sighted when they declared that there was nothing to fear from the Volsungs :

' And now Sigurd Sigmundarson is commander of the enemy army.'

King Lyngvi sent out a call to arms throughout the whole of his kingdom—he refused to take flight and summoned every man prepared to support him. He now marched to meet Sigurd with a huge army—his brothers were with him.

A fierce battle now took place between them. Many a spear and many arrows could be seen hurtling through the air, the fierce sweep of the axe, cleft shields, gashed hauberks, helms slashed open, cleft skulls, and many a man was seen to fall to the ground.

After the battle had gone on in this way for a very long time, Sigurd pressed on past the banners, holding in his hand the sword Gram. He felled men and horses, too, advancing through the enemy line : both his arms were bloody to the shoulders, and people fled wherever he moved. Neither helm nor hauberk was proof against him, and there was not one who thought that he'd ever seen such a man before. The battle with its great slaughter and savage fighting went on a long time. What developed there was something that can happen but rarely when the home-based army attacks : it got them nowhere. Hunding's sons lost so many men that no one could keep count. And Sigurd was well

Sigurðr var framarla í fylkingu. Þá koma á mót honum synir Hundings konungs. Sigurðr hæggr til Lyngva konungs ok klyfr hjálm hans ok höfuð ok brynjaðan búk, ok síðan hæggr hann Hjørvarð, bróður hans, sundr í tvá hluti, ok þá drap hann alla Hundings sonu er eptir lifðu, ok mestan hluta liðs þeira.

Ferr Sigurðr nú heim með fögurum sigri ok miklu fé ok ágæti er hann hafði fengit í þessi ferð. Váru nú veizlur gervar í mót honum heima í ríkinu.

Ok er Sigurðr hefir skamma stund heima verit, kemr Reginn at máli við Sigurð ok segir,

‘Nú munu þér vilja steypa hjálminum Fáfnis svá sem þér hétuð, því at nú hefir þú hefnt fœður þíns ok annarra frænda þinna.^a

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Efna munu vér þat sem vér höfum þar um heitit, ok ekki fellr oss þat ór minni.’

18

Nú^b ríða þeir Sigurðr ok Reginn upp á heiðina á þann farveg er Fáfni var vanr at skríða er hann fór til vatns, ok þat er sagt at sá hamarr var þrítugr er hann lá at vatni, þá er hann drakk.

Þá mælti Sigurðr, ‘Þat sagðir þú, Reginn, at dreki sjá væri eigi meiri en einn lyngormr, en mér sýnask vegar hans æfar miklir.’

Reginn mælti, ‘Ger grœf eina ok sezk þar í. Ok þá er ormrinn skríðr til vatns, legg þá til hjarta honum ok vinn honum svá bana. Þar fyrir fær þú mikinn frama.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Hversu mun þá veita ef ek verð fyrir sveita ormsins?’

Reginn svarar, ‘Eigi má þér ráð ráða er þú ert við hvatvetna^c hræddr. Ok ertu ólíkr þínum frændum at hughreysti.’

Nú ríðr Sigurðr á heiðina, en Reginn hverfr í brott yfrit hræddr. Sigurðr gerði grœf eina. Ok er hann er at þessu verki, kemr at honum einn gamall maðr^d með síðu skeggi ok spyr hvat hann gerir þar. Hann segir.

Þá svarar inn gamli maðr, ‘Þetta er óráð. Ger fleiri grafar ok lát þar í renna sveitann, en þú sit í einni ok legg til hjartans orminum.’

Þá hvarf sá maðr á brottu. En Sigurðr gerir grafar eptir því sem fyrir var sagt.^d

Ok er ormrinn skreið til vatns, varð mikill landskjálfti, svá at öll

^a thus *Ol*, sinna *V*

^b *The preceding ch. heading reads* Nu ríða þeir Reginn ok Sigurðr.

^c hvart-*V*

^d lagt *B*

to the fore. Then King Hunding's sons came at him : Sigurd struck at King Lyngvi and cleft his helm, head and armoured body. Next he cut in half his brother, Hjorvard, and then struck down all the sons of Hunding that were left, and the best part of their force.

So Sigurd set out for home. A splendid victory was his, and also much wealth and renown which he had won on the expedition. Back in his own country a festive welcome was prepared for him.

And when Sigurd had been at home a short time, Regin came to talk to him :

'You'll surely be ready now to bring low Fafnir's helm as you promised, seeing that you've avenged your father and your other kinsmen,' said Regin.

'I'll keep my promise,' answered Sigurd. 'It won't slip my memory.'

18

Now Sigurd and Regin rode up to the moors, to the track along which Fafnir used to crawl when he went to drink, and the crag he lay on to get at the water when he drank, was said to be thirty fathoms high.

'You told me, Regin,' said Sigurd then, 'that this monster was no bigger than any serpent, but his tracks look very big to me.'

'Dig a pit,' said Regin, 'and sit in it, and when the dragon comes crawling to the water, stab him to the heart and so destroy him. Then you'll win great distinction.'

'What if I get in the way of the dragon's blood?' said Sigurd.

'It's not possible to advise you,' replies Regin, 'if you're scared of everything—you've nothing like the courage of your kinsmen.'

So Sigurd rode up to the moors and Regin went off in great fright. Sigurd dug a pit, and while he was about this an old man¹ with a long beard came up to him and asked what he was doing there. He told him.

'That's ill-advised,' the old man then replied. 'Dig other pits and let the blood run into them—you are to sit in one and stab the dragon to the heart.'

Then the old man vanished, and Sigurd dug the pits as he had been told.

And when the dragon crawled to the water, the earth tremors were

¹ This is Odin once again.

þorð skal í nánd. Hann fnýsti eitri alla leið fyrir sik fram, ok eigi hræddisk Sigurðr né óttask við þann gný. Ok er ormrinn skreið yfir gröfina, þá leggr Sigurðr sverðinu undir bæxlit vinstra, svá at við hjöltum nam. Þá hleypr Sigurðr upp ór gröfinni ok kippir at sér sverðinu ok hefir allar hendr blóðgar upp til axlar. Ok er inn mikli ormr kenndi síns banasárs, þá laust hann höfðinu ok sporðinum svá at allt brast í sundr er fyrir varð. Ok er Fáfñir fekk banasár, spurði hann,

‘Hverr ertu, eða hverr er þinn faðir, eða hver er ætt þín, er þú vart svá djarfr at þú þorir ^a at bera vápn á mik?’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Ætt mín er monnum ókunnig. Ek heiti gøfugt dýr ok á ek engan fōður né móður, ok einn saman hefi ek farit.’¹

Fáfñir svarar, ‘Ef þú átt engan feðr né mœðr, af hverju undri ertu þá alinn? Ok þótt þú segir mér eigi þitt nafn á banadægri mínu, þá veiztu at þú lýgr nú.’

Hann svarar, ‘Ek heiti Sigurðr, en faðir minn Sigmundur.’

Fáfñir svarar, ‘Hverr eggjaði þik þessa verks, eða hví léztu at eggjask? Hafðir þú eigi frétt þat, hversu allt fólk er hrætt við mik ok við minn ægishjálms? Inn fráneygi sveinn, þú áttir feðr snarpan.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Til þessa hvatti mik inn harði hugr, ok stoðaði til at gert yrði þessi in sterka hönd ok þetta it snarpa sverð, er nú kenndir þú, ok fárr er gamall harðr ef hann er í bernsku blautr.’

Fáfñir segir, ‘Veit ek, ef þú yxir ^b upp með frændum þínum, at þú mundir kunna at vega reiðr, en þetta er meiri furða er einn bandingi hertekinn ² skal þorat hafa at vega at mér, því at fár hernuminn er ^c frækn til vígs.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Bregðr þú mér at ek væra fjarri mínum frændum? En þótt ek væra hernuminn, þá var ek þó eigi heptr, ok þat fanntu at ek var lauss.’

Fáfñir svarar, ‘Heiptyrði tekr þú hvetvetna því er ek mæli. En gull þetta mun þér at bana verða, er ek hefi átt.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Hverr vill fé hafa allt til ins eina dags, en eitt sinn skal hverr deyja.’

Fáfñir mælti, ‘Fátt vill þú at mínum dæmum gera, en drukna

^a *B emends to þorðir*

^b *vex V, emended following B's conjecture.*

^c *thus Ol, om. V*

¹ Sigurd at first refuses to give his name. There is a prose note at the equivalent passage in *PE* that refers in explanation to a belief held in ancient days that a dying man's curse, if he cursed his enemy by name, was especially efficacious (in *Göngu-Hrólfs Saga*, ch. 33, a mortally wounded magician is gagged to prevent him from laying a curse on his enemy). R. C. Boer (note to *Fáfnismál*, st. 2, l. 1) suggests that *gøfugt dýr* (‘Noble Beast’) may be a term for human being. See Introduction p. xxxiii.

so violent that all the land round about shook. He breathed out poison all over the path ahead, but Sigurd was neither frightened nor dismayed by the noise. And when the dragon crawled across the pit, Sigurd thrust in the sword under the left shoulder, and it sunk in up to the hilt. Then Sigurd leapt out of the pit, wrenching back the sword, and getting his arms bloody right up to the shoulders. And when the huge dragon felt its death wound, it lashed with its tail and head, shattering everything that got in its way. And when Fafnir received his death wound he asked :

‘ Who are you ? Who is your father and what is your family, you who have been bold enough to dare to bear arms against me ? ’

‘ No man knows of my family,’ replied Sigurd. ‘ I’m called “ Noble Beast ”, I’ve neither father nor mother, and I’ve journeyed alone.’¹

‘ If you’ve no father or mother,’ Fafnir answered, ‘ what strange thing gave you life ? And even though you won’t tell me your name on this, the day I shall die, you know that you are now lying.’

‘ My name is Sigurd,’ he answered, ‘ and my father is Sigmund.’

‘ Who prompted you to do this deed, and why did you follow his prompting ? ’ replied Fafnir. ‘ Hadn’t you heard how everyone was frightened of me and my terrible armoured head ? Your eyes flash, boy, and you had a gallant father.’

‘ A stout heart urged me on to do it,’ was Sigurd’s reply, ‘ and a strong arm and this keen sword that you’ve now felt, helped me to carry it through, and few are resolute when old, if timid in youth.’

‘ I know that you’d be an angry man in a fight,’ said Fafnir, ‘ had you grown up among your kinsmen, but it’s even more amazing that a captive taken in a raid² should have dared to fight against me—few prisoners are courageous in battle.’

‘ You reproach me for being far from my kinsmen,’ said Sigurd. ‘ But even if I was a prisoner, I wasn’t fettered, and you have learned that I was free.’

‘ Everything I say you take to be said in hate,’ answered Fafnir, ‘ but the gold I possessed will be your death.’

‘ Everyone wants to keep hold on wealth until that day come, but everyone must die some time,’ replied Sigurd.

‘ You’ll not be guided much by what I say,’ said Fafnir, ‘ but if

² A reference to the events described on p. 22, where his mother is taken off by a raiding party to the land of King Hjalprek.

muntu ef þú ferr um sjá óvarliga, ok bíð heldr á landi unz logn er.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Seg þú þat, Fáfnir, ef þú ert fróðr mjök: hverjar eru þær nornir¹ er kjósa mögu frá mæðrum?'

Fáfnir svarar, 'Margar eru þær ok^a sundrausar.^b Sumar eru Ása ættar, sumar eru álfa² ættar, sumar eru dætr Dvalins.'³

Sigurðr mælti, 'Hvé heitir sá hólmr⁴ er blanda hjörlegi^c Surtr⁵ ok Æsir saman?'

Fáfnir svarar, 'Hann heitir Óskaptr.'⁶ Ok enn mælti Fáfnir, 'Reginn, bróðir minn, veldr mínum dauða, ok þat hlægir mik er hann veldr ok þínum dauða, ok ferr þá sem hann vildi.' Enn mælti Fáfnir,

'Ek bar ægishjálmm yfir öllu fólki, síðan ek lá á arfi míns bróður, ok svá fnýsta ek eitri alla vega frá mér í brott at engi þorði at koma í nánd mér, ok engi vápn hrædumk ek, ok aldri fann ek svá margan mann fyrir mér at ek þættumk eigi miklu sterkari, en allir váru hræddir við mik.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Sá ægishjálmmr, er þú sagðir frá, gefr fám sigr því at hverr sá er með mörgum kemr, má þat finna eitthvert sinn at engi er einna hvatastr.'

Fáfnir svarar, 'Þat ræð ek þér, at þú takir hest þinn ok ríðir á brott sem skjótast, því at þat hendir opt at sá er banasár fær, hefnir sín sjálfr.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þetta eru þín ráð, en annat mun ek gera. Ek mun ríða til þíns bóls ok taka þar þat it mikla gull er frændr þínir hafa átt.'

Fáfnir svarar, 'Ríða muntu þar til er þú finnr svá mikit gull at ærit^d er um þína daga, ok þat sama gull verðr þinn bani ok hvers annars er þat á.'

Sigurðr stóð upp ok mælti, 'Heim munda ek ríða, þótt ek missta þessa ins mikla fjár, ef ek víska at ek skylda aldri deyja, en hverr frækn maðr vill fé ráða allt til ins eina dags. En þú, Fáfnir, ligg í fjörbrotum, þar er þik Hel hafi.'

Ok þá deyr Fáfnir.

^a thus *Ol*, *om. V*

^b -un- *illegible V*

^c -qr- *illeg. V*

^d gert *B*

¹ See Glossary s.v. *nornir*

² See Glossary s.v. *álfar*

³ A dwarf. See Glossary s.v. *dvergar*

⁴ The *hólmr*, basically signifying 'islet' is to be understood here as a place of battle, a subsidiary connotation, arising out of the ancient custom of engaging in a form of single combat called *hólmganga* on an islet appointed for that purpose, a properly marked out piece of ground being sometimes substituted.

you're careless in crossing the sea you'll be drowned : better wait on shore until it's calm.'

'Tell me, then, Fafnir,' said Sigurd, 'if you are so wise: who are the Norns¹ that deliver mothers of their sons?'

'They are many and varied,' replied Fafnir. 'Some belong to the Æsir, some belong to the elves,² and some are Dvalin's³ daughters.'

'What is the name of the islet⁴ where Surt⁵ and the Æsir will shed each other's blood?' said Sigurd.

'It is named Oskapt,'⁶ replied Fafnir. Fafnir spoke again: 'My brother Regin has brought about my death, and I am glad that he will bring about your death, too—that will be just what he wanted.' Fafnir spoke again:

'I raised a crest of terror above all men ever since I couched on my brother's inheritance, and I breathed out poison all around me so that no one dared to come near me, and I feared no weapon, and never found so many against me that I didn't think myself by far the stronger, and they were all afraid of me.'

'This crest of terror you spoke of,' said Sigurd, 'gives victory to few, for anyone who mixes with many people may one day find that no man is the superior of all others.'

'I advise you to take your horse,' replied Fafnir, 'and ride away as quickly as you can, for it often happens that he who suffers a mortal wound avenges himself.'

'That is your advice,' answered Sigurd, 'but I shall act differently. I shall ride to your lair and there seize the vast treasure that belonged to your kinsmen.'

'You'll be riding to a place where you'll find so much gold', Fafnir answered, 'that it will last you all your days. But that same gold will be your death, and the death of any other man that possesses it.'

Sigurd stood up. 'If I knew I'd never die, I'd ride back,' he said, 'even though I were to forfeit all the wealth. But every valiant man desires to have wealth until that day comes. But you, Fafnir, lie in your death-throes until Hel takes you.'

And then Fafnir died.

¹ Surt was the giant with the flaming sword, the chief adversary of the Æsir in the final battle when the gods are destroyed by the giants, aided by the World-serpent and other allies. Surt slays Frey and consumes the world with fire. (See Jónsson, *SnE*, 98.)

⁶ The name literally implies 'not fashioned', 'not created'.

Eptir ^a þetta kom Reginn til Sigurðar ok mælti,

‘Heill, herra minn; mikinn sigr hefir þú unnit er þú hefir drepit Fáfni, er engi varð fyrir svá djarfr at á hans götu þorði sitja, ok þetta fremðarverk mun uppi meðan veröldin stendr.’

Nú stendr Reginn ok sér niðr í jörðina langa hríð. Ok þegar eptir þetta mælti hann af miklum móði,

‘Bróður minn hefir þú drepit, ok varla má ek þessa verks saklauss vera.’

Nú tekr Sigurðr sitt sverð, Gram, ok þerrir á grasinu ok mælti til Regins,

‘Fjarri gekk þú þá, er ek vann þetta verk ok ek reynda þetta snarpa sverð með minni hendi, ok mínu afli atta ek við orms megin, meðan þú látt í einum lyngrunni, ok vissir þú eigi ^b hvárt er var himinn eða jörð.’

Reginn svarar, ‘Þessi ormr mætti lengi liggja í sínu bóli ef eigi hefðir þú notit sverðs þess er ek gerða þér minni hendi, ok eigi hefðir þú ^c þetta enn unnit, ok engi annarra.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Þá er menn koma til vígs, þá er manni betra gott hjarta en hvasst sverð.’

Þá mælti Reginn við Sigurð af áhyggju mikilli, ‘Þú drapt minn bróður, ok varla má ek þessa verks saklauss.’

Þá skar Sigurðr ^d hjartat ór orminum með því sverði er Riðill hét. Þá drakk Reginn blóð Fáfnis ok mælti,

‘Veit mér eina bæn er þér er lítit fyrir: gakk til elds með hjartat ok steik ok gef mér at eta.’

Sigurðr fór ok steikti á teini. Ok er freyddi ór, þá tók hann fingr sínum á ok skynjaði hvárt steikt væri. Hann ^e brá fingrinum í munn sér. Ok er hjartablóð ormsins kom á tungu honum, þá skilði hann fuglarödd.¹ Hann heyrði at igður klökuðu á hrisinu hjá honum.

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads* Reginn drakk blóð Fáfnis.

^b *thus Ol, om. V*

^c *thus Ol, om. V*

^d *? mistake for* Reginn (CR)

^e *B adds (in brackets) brann ok from CR.*

¹ The belief that birds (and other animals) were able to give warning of impending danger was widespread in Europe and elsewhere (see Alexander H. Krappe, ‘Warning Animals’, *Folklore* LIX (1948), 8–15). At the turn of the century there was still a belief in Iceland that the gift of understanding the

After this Regin came to Sigurd and said :

‘Greetings, my lord. You have won a great victory by killing Fafnir, when before no man was daring enough to lie in wait for him, and this great deed will live for as long as the world shall last.’

Regin now stood looking down at the ground for a long time. And thereupon he said in great anger:

‘You have killed my brother, but I can scarcely be free of blame for the deed.’

Then Sigurd took up his sword Gram, wiped it on the grass and said to Regin :

‘You went a good way off while I performed the deed, and I tried out this keen sword with my own hand, and with my own strength I strove against the might of the dragon—while you were lying in a heather bush, not knowing whether you were on your head or your heels!’

‘That dragon might have lain in his lair a long time,’ replied Regin, ‘if you hadn’t had the use of the sword I fashioned for you with my own hands—neither you nor anyone else would have done it yet!’

‘When men come to do battle,’ answered Sigurd, ‘then a stout heart is better for a man than a keen sword.’

Regin then said to Sigurd in great distress :

‘You killed my brother, but I can scarcely be free of blame for the deed.’

Then Sigurd cut out the dragon’s heart with the sword called Ridill. Regin then drank Fafnir’s blood and said :

‘Do something for me—it’s a small matter for you. Take the heart to the fire, roast it and give it me to eat.’

Sigurd went and roasted it on a spit. And when the juice sputtered out he touched it with his finger to see whether it was done. He jerked his finger to his mouth, and when the blood from the dragon’s heart touched his tongue he could understand the language of birds.¹ He heard some tits twittering near him in the thicket.

speech of birds was conferred by eating the heart of a raven or stone-falcon (see Detter-Heinzel, note to *Fáfnismál*, st. 32, ll. 9–10). The birds here, as in the corresponding section of the Poetic Edda (*Fáfnismál*, st. 33 ff.) also serve as an incitement to action. Birds exercised this same function elsewhere in the Poetic Edda, viz. *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar*, st. 1 ff., and *Rígsþula*, st. 35 ff.

‘ Þar ^a sitr ^b Sigurðr ok steikir Fáfnis hjarta. Þat skyldi hann sjálfr eta. Þá mundi hann verða hverjum manni vitrari.’

Qnnur segir, ‘ Þar liggir Reginn ok vill véla þann sem honum trúir.’ Þá mælti in þriðja,

‘ Hoggvi hann þá hofuð af honum, ok má hann þá ráða gullinu því inu miklu einn.’

Þá mælti in fjórða, ‘ Þá væri hann vitrari ef hann hefði þat sem þær hofðu ráðit honum, ok riði síðan til bóls Fáfnis ok tæki þat it mikla gull er þar er, ok riði síðan upp á Hindarfjall þar sem Brynhildir ¹ sefr, ok mun hann nema þar mikla speki, ok þá væri hann vitr ef hann hefði yður ráð ok hygði hann um sína þurft, ok þar er mér úlfins ván er ek eyrun sá.’ Þá mælti in fimmta,

‘ Eigi er hann svá horskr sem ek ætla ^c ef hann vægir honum, en drepit áðr bróður hans.’ Þá mælti in sétta,

‘ Þat væri snjallræði ef hann dræpi hann ok réði einn ^d fénu.’

Þá mælti Sigurðr, ‘ Eigi munu þau ósköp at Reginn sé minn bani, ok heldr skulu þeir fara báðir bræðr einn veg.’

Bregðr nú sverðinu Gram ok hæggr hofuð af Regin.

Ok eptir þetta etr hann suman hlut hjartans ormsins, en sumt hirðir hann; hleypr síðan á hest sinn ok reið eptir slóð Fáfnis ok til hans herbergis ok fann at þat var opit, ok af járnri hurðirnar allar ok þar með allr dyraumbúningrinn, ok af járnri allir stokkar í húsínu, ok grafit í jörð niðr. Sigurðr fann þar stórmikit gull ok sverðit Hrotta, ok þar tók hann ægishjálrn ok gullbrynjuna ok marga dýrgripi. Hann fann þar svá mikit gull at honum þótti ván at eigi mundi meira bera tveir hestar eða þrír. Þat gull tekr hann allt ok berr í tvær kistur miklar, tekr nú ² í tauma hestinum Grana. Hestrinn vill nú eigi ganga, ok ekki tjár at keyra. Sigurðr finnr nú hvat hestrinn vill; hleypr hann á bak ok lýstr hann sporum, ok rennr sjá hestr sem lauss væri.

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurðr at hjartat ormsins.*

^b *thus Ol, sitr þú V, the þú best omitted because of the following hann construction.*

^c *B emends to ætlaða*

^d *thus Ol, enn V*

¹ See Introduction pp. xxi f., xxxiii

² There seems to be a stage missing: the prose conclusion of *Fáfnisráð* in PE has ‘ok klyfjaði þar með Grana’, i.e. ‘and loaded them on to Grani’.

‘ There sits Sigurd, roasting Fafnir’s heart. He should eat it himself, and then he’d be wiser than any man.’

‘ There lies Regin meaning to play false the man who trusts him,’ said a second. Then said a third :

‘ Let him then strike off his head. Then he can have the great treasure all to himself.’

‘ He would be wiser to do as they advised,’ said then a fourth, ‘ and afterwards ride to Fafnir’s lair, taking the great treasure that lies there, and then ride up to Hind Fell where Brynhild¹ is sleeping, and there he will learn much wisdom. And he would be wise if he followed your advice and thought of his own needs. I’d expect to find a wolf where I spied his ears.’ Then said a fifth :

‘ If he spares him, having previously killed his brother, he’s not as wise as I imagine.’ Then said the sixth :

‘ It would be a sound plan if he killed him and had the treasure all to himself.’

‘ Death at Regin’s hands is not my evil destiny,’ said Sigurd then. ‘ Better instead for both brothers to go the same way.’ Then he drew the sword Gram and struck off Regin’s head.

And after that he ate some of the dragon’s heart, and some he put by. Then he leapt on his horse and rode along following Fafnir’s tracks up to his lair. He found that it was open, and that all the doors were made of iron, and the whole of the door-frame as well. Of iron, too, were all the posts of the building, which was anchored deep in the earth. There Sigurd found a vast store of gold, and the sword Hrotti, and there he took possession of the helm of terror, the gold hauberk and many valuables. He found so much gold there that he thought it probable that two horses or even three would scarcely carry more. He took all the gold and put it into two large chests, then² took his horse Grani by the bridle. But the horse wouldn’t move and whipping did no good. Then Sigurd saw what the horse wanted. He leapt on his back, clapped spurs to him, and the horse galloped away as if unladen.

Sigurðr^a ríðr nú langar leiðir ok allt til þess er hann kemr upp á Hindarfjall, ok stefndi á leið suðr til Frakklands. Á fjallinu sá hann fyrir sér ljós mikit sem eldr brynni, ok ljómaði af til himins. En er hann^b kom at, stóð þar fyrir honum skjaldborg¹ ok upp ór merki. Sigurðr gekk í skjaldborgina ok sá at þar svaf maðr ok lá með ǫllum hervápnum. Hann tók fyrst hjálminn af hǫfði honum ok sá at þat var kona. Hon var í brynju, ok var svá fǫst sem hon væri holdgróin. Þá reist hann ofan ór hǫfuðsmátt ok í gegnum niðr ok svá út í gegnum báðar ermar, ok beit sem klæði. Sigurðr kvad hana helzti lengi sofit hafa. Hon spurði hvat svá var máttugt er beit brynjuna,—

‘ Ok brá mínum svefni, eða mun hér kominn Sigurðr Sigmundarson er hefir hjálm Fáfnis ok hans bana í hendi ? ’

Þá svarar Sigurðr, ‘ Sá er Vqlsunga ættar er þetta verk hefir gert, ok þat hefi ek spurt at þú ert ríks konungs dóttir, ok þat sama hefir oss sagt verit frá yðrum vænleik ok vitru, ok þat skulu vér reyna.’

Brynhildr segir at tveir konungar þorðusk. Hét annarr Hjálmgunnarr. Hann var gamall ok inn mesti hermaðr, ok hafði Óðinn honum sigri heitit, en annarr Agnarr eða Auðabróðir.

‘ Ek fellda Hjálmgunnar í orrostu, en Óðinn stakk mik svefnþorni í hefnd þess ok kvað mik aldri síðan skyldu sigr hafa ok kvað mik giptask skulu. En ek strengða þess heit þar í mót at giptask engum þeim er hræðask kynni.’^c

Sigurðr mælti, ‘ Kenn oss ráð til stórra hluta.’

Hon svarar, ‘ Þér munuð betr kunna, en með þökkum vil ek^d kenna yðr, ef þat er nokkut er vér kunnum, þat er yðr mætti líka, í rúnum eða ǫðrum hlutum er liggja til hvers hlutar, ok drekkum bæði saman, ok gefi goðin okkr góðan dag, at þér verði nyt ok frægð at mínum vitrleik ok þú munir eptir þat er vit ræðum.’

Brynhildr fyllði eitt ker ok færði Sigurði ok mælti :

(6) Þjór færi ek þér,
brynþinga valdr,
magni blandinn
ok megintíri.

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads frá Sigurði*

^b *thus Ol, CR; om. V*

^c *thus Ol, CR; kunni V*

^d *thus Ol, vil ek om. V*

¹ *Skjaldborg* literally signifies ‘ shield rampart ’ though the banner out on

Sigurd now rode a long way until he arrived right up on Hind Fell and turned off south to Frankland. On the fell he saw a bright glow ahead as if there were a fire blazing, and it lit up the sky. And when he got up to it there stood before him a fort¹ with a banner out on top. Sigurd went inside the fort and saw a man there, asleep and lying fully armoured. First he removed the helmet from his head and saw that it was a woman. She had on a hauberk and it was as tight as if grown into the flesh. Then he sheared right down from the neck, then right along both sleeves, and the blade bit in as if cutting cloth. Sigurd said she'd been asleep too long. She asked what was strong enough to bite into the hauberk—

‘And to interrupt my sleep. And is it Sigurd Sigmundarson who has come here with Fafnir's helm, bearing Fafnir's doom in his hand?’

‘He who has done this deed is of the Volsung line,’ then replied Sigurd. ‘And I have heard that you are the daughter of a powerful king, and I've also been told of your beauty and your wisdom—and this I shall put to the test.’

Brynhild told how two kings had been fighting. One was called Hjalmgunnar—he was old and a fine warrior, and Odin had promised him the victory; and the other was called Agnar or Audabrodur.

‘In the battle I struck down Hjalmgunnar, and in retaliation Odin pricked me with the sleep thorn, said that I should never again win a victory, and that I was to marry. And in return I made a solemn vow to marry no one who knew the meaning of fear.’

‘Give me good advice on things that matter,’ said Sigurd.

‘You are better able to do that,’ she said. ‘But I'll teach you gladly if I know anything that might please you, whether of runes or of other matters pertaining to everything; and let us both drink together, and may the Gods grant us a good day, so that my wisdom may profit you and bring you fame, and that you may remember what we two talk of.’

Brynhild filled a cup, brought it to Sigurd and said:

(6) Ruler of battles,
I now bring you ale
mixed with great power,
mingled with fame,

top and Brynhild's hospitality would seem to indicate that the saga writer had an actual building in mind.

filled with versed charms
and friendship runes,
with goodly spells,
with gay talk brimming.

- (7) War runes you must know
if wise you would be.
On sword-guard grave them,
on hilt-sockets,
on hilt's iron grip,
and twice say Týr's ¹ name.
- (8) Wave runes you must cut
to watch over with care
your sailed steeds in swimming.
On prow put them,
place them on steering oar,
and burn them also on oars.
No blue wave shall fall,
nor breaker steep,
but you'll return safe from the sea.
- (9) Speech runes you must know,
to be spared, if you wish
repayment of grief rendered.
Wind them about,
weave them around,
side by side set them
there at that Thing ²
where throngs shall come,
all to full session faring.
- (10) Ale runes you must know,
lest another's wife

¹ i.e. twice carve the symbol that bears his name. Snorri (Jónsson, *SnE* 48) says of Týr that he is the boldest and most valiant of the Æsir. The tale is told how he put his hand in the wolf Fenrir's mouth as a pledge of the Æsir's good faith, only to lose it when his companions refused to loose the wolf's bonds. He was also considered to be a god of battle (hence his intimate connection with the victory runes alluded to in st. 7), and to be possessed of considerable wisdom. He plays a rather subordinate role in Norse mythology, though seems at one time to have enjoyed considerably greater fame. His name supplies the first element of our Tuesday, a translation of the Latin 'Dies Martis'.

² The provincial or national legislative and judicial assembly

véli þik eigi í ^a tryggð, ef þú trúir.
 Á horni skal þær ^b rísta
 ok á handarbaki
 ok merkja á nagli nauð.¹

(11) Full ^c skaltu signa
 ok við fári sjá
 ok verpa lauk í lög.
 Þá ek þat veit,
 at þér verðr aldri
 meinblandinn mjöðr.

(12) Bjargrúnar skaltu nema,
 ef þú vill borgit fá
 ok leysa kind frá konu.
 Á lófa skal þær rísta
 ok um liðu spenna
 ok biðja dísir ² duga.

(13) Limrúnar skaltu kunna,
 ef þú vill læknir vera
 ok kunna sár at sjá.
 Á berki skal þær rísta,
 ok á barri viðar
 þess er lúti austr limar.

(14) Hugrúnar skaltu nema,
 ef þú vill hverjum vera
 geðhorskari guma.
 Þær of réð,
 þær of reist,
 þær of hugði Hroptr.³

(15) Á skildi váru ristnar,
 þeim er stendr fyrir skínanda guði,⁴

^a thus *Ol*, om. *V*

^b thus *Ol*, þat *V*

^c thus *Ol*, *CR*; *ql V*

¹ The name of one of the characters of the runic alphabet

² See Glossary s.v. *dísir*

³ One of Odin's names

⁴ i.e. the sun. In *PE*, *Grímnismál*, st. 38, the shield referred to here is called *Svalin*, the name deriving from *svalr*, 'cool'. Its purpose seems to be to protect the earth from the sun's fiery heat since, should it fall from its position, 'braes and breakers all shall burn' (*Grímnismál* st. 38).

betray trust if you trust her.
On the horn you must carve them,
on hand's back, too,
and mark on nail Need.¹

- (11) Filled cup you must bless
against bane to guard,
cast garlic into the goblet.
Then this I promise,
that poisoned mead
will not fall to your fate.
- (12) Life runes you must learn
for those labouring with child,
to deliver babe safe and sound.
On palm you must carve them,
clasp them round limbs,
and aid of the Disir ² desire.
- (13) Twig runes you must know
for treating the sick,
to see wisely to wounds.
Lay them on bark,
on the leaves of the tree
whose boughs bend to the east.
- (14) Mind runes you must learn
if other men you would
quite outweigh in wisdom.
He who devised them,
he who divined them
and hewed them out, 'twas Hropt.³
- (15) On the shield were they graved
before the shining god,⁴

á eyra Árvakrs
 ok á ^a Alsvinnns ¹ hofði
 ok á því hveli, er stendr
 undir reið Rognis, ^b ²
 á Sleipnis ³ taumum ^c
 ok á sleða fjotrurum.

(16) Á bjarnar hrammi
 ok á Braga ⁴ tungu,
 á úlfs klóm
 ok á arnar nefi, ^d
 á blóðgum vængjum
 ok á brúar sporði,
 á lausnar lófa
 ok á ^e líknar spori.

(17) Á gleri ok á gulli
 ok á góðu silfri,
 í víni ok í virtri
 ok á völu ⁵ sessi,
 í guma holdi,
 ok Gaupnis ^f ⁶ oddi
 ok á gýgjar ⁷ brjósti,
 á nornar ⁸ nagli
 ok á nefi uglu.

(18) Allar váru af skafnar,
 þær er á váru ristnar,
 ok hræðar við inn helga mjöð
 ok sendar á víða vegu.
 Þær eru með álfum, ⁹
 sumar með Ásum

^a á eyra Árvakrs ok á om. V; inserted by Ol following CR.

^b Mistake for Hrunnis, CR has originally Rognis altered to Rungnis and emended by Neckel to Hrunnis.

^c Perhaps mistake for tönnum, cf. CR.

^d thus Ol, CR; nefiu V ^e thus Ol, om. V

^f mistake for Gungnis (CR)

¹ The names Árvak and Alsvið, literally signifying 'Early Waker' and 'All Swift' (or possibly 'All Wise') respectively, were those of the horses that drew the sun chariot through the heavens. The chariot itself was made by the gods from sparks out of Muspellsheim, the abode of fire, that the universe should have light. It was driven by Sól, a personification of the sun (see Jónsson, *SnE* 29 f.).

On Arvak's ear
 and Alsvið's head.¹
 Carved there on the wheel
 'neath the wain of Rognir,²
 on Sleipnir's ³ reins,
 and on sleigh's traces.

(16) On bear's paw too,
 on Bragi's ⁴ tongue,
 on both wolf's claw
 and beak of eagle,
 on bloody wings,
 on bridge's head,
 on freeing palm
 and path of mercy.

(17) On glass and gold,
 and on good silver,
 in wine and wort,
 on witch's ⁵ throne,
 on Gaupnir's ⁶ point
 and pelt of men,
 and put them on hag's ⁷ breast,
 on Norn's ⁸ nail too,
 and neb of owl.

(18) All scored in these
 were scraped away,
 and mingled with mead most holy,
 and sent on far flung ways.
 They are with elves,⁹
 with the Æsir some,

¹ Another name for Odin. It probably derives from *regin*, 'the gods', and connotes 'the ruler of the gods', 'the supreme god'. Cleasby-Vigfusson suggests that Rognir's Wain is in fact the constellation *ursa major*.

² See p. 24 n. 1

³ Bragi was the god of poetry. His wife was the goddess Idun (see p. 3, n. 1). Bragi may originally have been an hypostasis of Odin, the god most concerned with the poetic art, who ultimately developed into an independent deity (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* II, 272 f.), though some scholars see in him the ninth-century skald Bragi Boddason raised to divine rank (see e.g. Turville-Petre, *Origins*, 35).

⁴ See Glossary s.v. *volva*

⁵ Gungnir of *CR* (see textual note) was the name of Odin's spear.

⁶ A female giant, an ogress, see also Glossary s.v. *troll*

⁷ See Glossary s.v. *nornir* ⁸ See Glossary s.v. *alfar*

ok með vísu Vqnum,¹
sumar ^a hafa mennskir menn.

(19) Þat eru bókrúnar
ok bjargrúnar
ok allar qlrúnar ^b
ok mærar ^c meginrúnar
hverjum, er þær kná óvilltar
ok óspilltar ^d
sér at heillum hafa.
Njóttu, ef þú namt,
unz rjúfask ^e regin.²

(20) Nú skaltu kjósa,
alls þér er kostur of boðinn,
hvassa vápna hlynr.³
Sogn ^f eða þogn
haf þú þér sjálfr of hug.
Qll eru mál of metin.

Sigurðr svarar,

(21) Munkat ek flæja
þótt mik feigan vitir,
emkat ek með ^g bleyði borinn.
Ástráð þín
vil ek ql of hafa,
svá lengi sem ek lifi.

22

Sigurðr ^h mælti, 'Aldri finnsk þér vitrari kona í veröldu, ok kenn enn fleiri spekiráð.'

Hon svarar, 'Heimult er þat at gera at yðrum vilja ok gefa heilræði fyrir yðra eptirleitan ok vitrleik.' Þá mælti hon,

'Ver vel við frændr þína ok hefn lítt mótgerða við þá ok ber við

^a thus Ol, CR; sumir V

^b thus Ol, CR; alrúnar V

^c thus Ol, mærar ok V, mætar CR

^d thus Ol, CR; of villtar V

^e thus Ol, CR; rjúfa V

^f thus Ol, CR; song V (MS spelling Savngh)

^g thus Ol, CR; om. V

^h The preceding ch. heading reads spekiráð Brynhildar

¹ The *Vanir* were a race of gods originally distinct from the *Æsir* who had at one time waged war against them.

and with Vanir¹ of vast wisdom,
and some are found midst men.

(19) Beech runes are these
and birth runes, too,
and all ale runes,
great, glorious runes
for all who use them
unspoilt and true
to lead luck thence.
Possess them and prosper
'til the gods are gone.²

(20) Now you must choose,
a choice of all's offered,
O maple tree of true weapons.³
Speech or silence,
you yourself shall decide.
Now all the words are weighed.

Sigurd answered :

(21) I shall not fly,
though you know me foredoomed ;
I was created no craven.
Your friendly counsel
in full I would have,
as long as I may live.

'In all the world there'll never be a wiser woman than you,' said Sigurd. 'Give me more good advice.'

'I owe it to you to do as you wish and to give you sound advice,' she replied, 'because you desired it and because you are intelligent,' and then she said :

'Behave well towards your kinsmen and take but scant revenge on

² A reference to *Ragnarök*, 'the doom of the gods' (later *røkkr*, 'twilight' was substituted for *rök*, 'doom'). Even the gods, the arbiters of men's destiny, are caught up in a fate from which there is no escape, and they perish at the onslaught of their adversaries (see p. 32, n. 5).

³ Kenning for 'warrior'

þol, ok tekr þú þar við langæligt lof. Sé við illum hlutum, bæði við meyar ást ok manns konu. Þar stendr opt illt af. Verð lítt mishugi við óvittra menn á fjölmennum mótum. Þeir mæla opt verra en þeir viti, ok ertu þegar bleyðimaðr kallaðr, ok ætla ^a at þú sér sonnu sagðr. Drep hann annars dags ok gjalt honum svá heiptyrði. Ef þú ferr þann veg er vándar vættir byggja, ver varr um þik. Tak þér ekki herbergi nær götu, þótt þik nátti, því at opt búa þar illar vættir, þær menn villa. Lát eigi tæla þik fagnar konur, þótt þú sjáir at veizlum, svá at þat standi þér fyrir svefni eða þú fáir af því hugarekka. Teyg þær ekki at þér með kossum eða annarri blíðu. Ok ef þú heyrir heimslig orð drukkinna manna, deil eigi við þá er víndrukknir eru ok tapa viti sínu. Slíkir hlutir verða mörpum at miklum móðtrega eða bana. Bersk heldr við óvini þína en þú sér brenndr.¹ Ok sver eigi rangan eið, því at grimmm hefnd fylgir griðrofi. Ger rækiliga við dauða menn, sótt dauða eða sædauða eða vápndauða. Búðu vandliga um lík þeira. Ok trú ^b ekki þeim er þú hefir felldan fyrir fōður eða bróður eða annan náfrænda, þótt ungr sé. Opt er úlfr í ungum syni. Sé vandliga við vélráðum vina þinna. En lítt megu vér sjá fyrir um yðart líf, en eigi skyldi mága hatr á þik koma.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Engi finnsk þér vitrari maðr, ok þess sver ek at þik skal ek eiga, ok þú ert við mitt æði.'

Hon svarar, 'Þik vil ek helzt eiga, þótt ek kjósa um alla menn.' Ok þetta bundu þau eiðum með sér.

23

Nú ^c ríðr Sigurðr á brott. Hans skjöldr var margfaldr ^d ok laugaðr í rauðu gulli ok skrifaðr á einn dreki. Hann var dökkbrúnaðr it efra, en fagrrauðr it neðra, ok þann veg var markaðr hans hjálmr ok soðull ok vápnrökk. Hann hafði gullbrynjuna, ok öll hans vápnr öllum at, er hann er sénn, má vita hverr þar ferr af öllum þeim er frétt hafa at hann drap þann mikla dreka er Væringjar ² kalla Fáfni. Ok fyrir því eru vápnr hans öll gulli

^a thus *Ol*, ætlar *V*. *B* emends to ætlaðr (? ætlat).

^b thus *Ol* foll. *CR* (*Sd.* 35); om. *V*

^c The preceding ch. heading reads Frá yfirlitum Sigurðar

^d *B* emends to svá markaðr, om. ok. The scribe may have meant to write this (cf. *PSS* ch. 291), but svá is scored out and margfaldr indisputable.

¹ i.e. to be cornered in one's own home by enemies who set fire to the house and refuse permission to leave (cf. p. 45). The most famous instance of this in Icelandic literature is the burning of *Njál* in *Njál's Saga*.

them for their offences. Bear with them, and you will win lasting praise. Be on your guard against things that are harmful, both against a maid's love and a man's wife, ill often comes of them. Don't argue over much with fools at crowded meetings. They often say worse things than they know, and then you are straightway called a coward, and people think the charges are true. Kill him another day and pay him back that way for his hostile remarks. If you go along a road where there are evil spirits, then be wary. Even if overtaken by nightfall do not seek shelter near the path—harmful spirits that lead men astray are often there. Don't get entangled with good-looking women—even though you see them at banquets—so that it stops you from sleeping, or brings you heartache. Don't entice them with kisses or other endearments. And if you hear drunks making stupid remarks, don't fall out with them when they're sodden with wine and have lost their wits. Things of that sort bring deep sorrow, or even death, to many. It's better to fight against your enemies than to be burned.¹ And don't swear a crooked oath, for dire vengeance follows on breach of truce. Do right by dead men, whether dead of disease, drowned or struck down. See to their bodies carefully. And don't trust anyone if you've killed his father, brother, or any other near relative, even though he's a young man. There's often a wolf in a young son. Watch out for trickery from your friends. And I can't foresee much of your life if the hatred of your wife's kinsmen does not fall upon you.'

'No one is wiser than you,' said Sigurd, 'and I swear it is you I shall marry, and we are ideally suited.'

'I should wish to marry you,' she answered, 'even though I might have the choice of all the men there are.' And this they swore, each to the other.

23

Then Sigurd rode away. His shield was of many thicknesses. It was plated with red gold, and on it was pictured a dragon. Its upper part was dark brown, and its lower light red, and his helm, saddle and surcoat were emblazoned in the same way. His hauberk was of gold, and all his weapons were decked with gold. And the reason for the dragon being emblazoned on all his weapons was so that all those who had heard that he'd killed the great dragon the Værings² called Fafnir, would know on seeing him who he was. And the reason for his weapons being

² Here used with the meaning 'Scandinavians'. It was also the name given to the Scandinavian body-guard of the emperors of Constantinople.

búin ok brún at lit, at hann er langt umfram aðra menn at kurteisi ok allri hæfersku ok nálíga at öllum hlutum. Ok þá er talðir eru allir inir stærstu kappar ok inir ágæztu höfðingjar, þá mun hann jafnan fremstr talðr, ok hans nafn gengr í öllum tungum fyrir norðan Grikklands haf,¹ ok svá mun vera meðan veröldin stendr. Hár hans var brúnt at lit ok fagrt at líta ok fór í stórlokka. Skeggit var þykkt ok skammt ok með sama lit. Hánefjaðr var hann ok hafði breitt andlit ok stórbeinótt. Augu hans váru svá snör at fár einn þorði at líta undir hans brún. Herðar hans váru svá miklar sem tveir menn væri á at sjá. Hans líkami var skapaðr allr við sik á hæð ok digrleik ok þann veg sem bezt má sama. Ok er þat mark um hans hæð, at þá er hann gyrði sik sverðinu Gram, en þat var sjau spanna hátt, ok er hann óð rúgakrinn fullvaxinn, þá tók niðr döggskórinn á sverðinu akrinn uppstandanda. Ok hans afl er meira en vöxtr. Vel kann hann sverði at beita ok spjóti at skjóta ok skapti at verpa ok skildi at halda, boga at spenna eða hesti^a at ríða, ok margs konar kurteisi nam hann í æsku. Hann var vitr maðr, svá at hann vissi fyrir óorðna hluti. Hann skilði fuglsrödd. Ok af slíkum hlutum kómu honum fáir hlutir á óvart. Hann var langtalaðr ok málsnjallr svá at ekki tók hann þat ørendi at mæla, at hann mundi fyrr hætta en svá sýnisk öllum sem enga leið muni eiga at vera nema svá sem hann segir. Ok þat er hans skemtán at veita lið sínum mönnum ok reyna sjálfan sik í stórræðum ok taka fé af sínum óvinum ok gefa sínum vinum. Eigi skorti hann hug, ok aldri varð hann hræddr.

24

Sigurðr^b ríðr nú þar til er hann kemr at einum miklum bæ. Þar réð fyrir einn mikill höfðingi, sá er Heimir hét. Hann átti systur Brynhildar er^c Bekkhildr² hét, því at hon hafði heima verit ok numit hannyrði, en Brynhildr fór með hjálm ok brynju ok gekk at^d vígum. Var hon því kölluð Brynhildr. Heimir ok Bekkhildr áttu einn son er Alsviðr hét, manna kurteisast. Þar léku menn úti. Ok er þeir sjá reið mannsins at bænum, hætta þeir leiknum ok undrask manninn, því at þeir höfðu engan slíkan sét. Gengu í mót honum ok fognuðu honum vel.

^a thus *Ol* and *ÞSS* ch. 291; hest *V*

^b *The preceding ch. heading reads* Sigurðr kom til Heimis.

^c thus *Ol*, om. *V*

^d thus *Ol*; á *B*, *V*

¹ i.e. the Ægean Sea

² The first element of the name signifies 'bench', a reference to the long wooden benches used as seats in the old Scandinavian 'hall', whereas the

all decked with gold and gleaming bright was that he far excelled others in fine manners, in all the social graces and well-nigh in everything. And when all the greatest heroes and the most famous leaders are spoken of, he is the one who will always be spoken of as foremost of all, and his name is current in all the languages spoken north of the Greek Ocean,¹ and so it will be for as long as the world endures. His hair, which fell in long locks, was brown and handsome to look on. His beard was short and thick and of the same colour. He had a high-bridged nose and broad, large-boned features. His eyes were so piercing that few dared look him in the face. His shoulders were so wide that to look at him was like looking at two men. His body was well proportioned as regards height and breadth and just as it should be. And an indication of his height is that when he belted on the sword Gram—it was over five feet long—and walked through a field of full grown rye, the scabbard-chape brushed the top of the standing grain. And his size was outdone by his strength. He was expert in sword-play, in throwing a spear or hurling a javelin, in shield work, in archery and in riding, and many and varied were the arts of chivalry he had acquired in his youth. He was a wise man having foreknowledge of future events. He could understand the language of birds. And for these reasons there was little that took him unawares. He could speak long and eloquently, and if he started on a speech he never stopped until everyone saw that his was the only way possible. And he loved to come to the aid of his men, to tax his powers in dangerous ventures, to rob his enemies of their wealth and to give to his friends. He never lacked courage and he was never afraid.

24

Sigurd now rode until he came to a large estate ruled over by an important chieftain named Heimir. He was married to Brynhild's sister who was called Bekkhild² because she had stayed at home and taken up the distaff, while Brynhild was concerned with helmet and hauberk and went to battle. This is why she was called Brynhild. Heimir and Bekkhild had a son named Alsvið, a man of most courtly bearing. Outside were people taking part in various sports, but when they saw the man riding up to the buildings they stopped, and they were amazed because they had never seen such a man. They went to meet him and

first element of Brynhild's name means 'coat of mail'. 'Hild' was an element in a number of female names: it was a poetic word for battle.

Alsviðr býðr honum með sér at vera ok af sér at þiggja slíkt er hann vill. Hann þiggr þat. Honum er ok skipat vegliga at þjóna. Fjórir menn hófu gullit af hestinum, inn fimmti tók við honum. Þar mátti sjá marga góða gripi ok fáséna. Var þat at skemtan haft at sjá brynjur ok hjálma ok stóra hringa ok undarlíga mikil gullstaup ok alls konar hervápn. Sigurðr dvelsk þar lengi í mikilli sæmð. Spyrsk nú þetta frægðarverk um qll lqnd, er hann hafði drepit þann inn ógurliga dreka. Þeir unðu sér nú vel, ok var hvárr oðrum holtr. Þat höfðu þeir sér at skemtan at búa vápn sín ok skepta qrvar sínar ok beita haukum sínum.

25

Þá ^a var heim komin til Heimis Brynhildr, fóstura hans. Hon sat í einni skemmu við meyar sínar. Hon kunni meira hagleik en aðrar konur. Hon lagði sinn borða með gulli ok saumaði á þau stórmerki er Sigurðr hafði gert, dráp ormsins ok upptöku fjárins ok dauða Regins. Ok einn dag er frá því sagt at Sigurðr reið á skóg við hundum sínum ok haukum ok miklu fjölmenni. Ok er hann kom heim, fló hans haukr á hávan turn ok settisk við einn glugg. Sigurðr fór eptir haukinum. Þá sér hann eina fagra konu ok kennir at þar er Brynhildr. Honum þykkir um vert allt saman, fegrð hennar ok þat er hon gerir. Kemr í höllina ok vill enga skemtan við menn eiga.

Þá mælti Alsviðr, 'Hví eru þér svá fálátir? Þessi skipan þín harmar oss ok þína vini. Eða hví máttu eigi gleði halda? Haukar þínir hnípa ok svá hestrinn Grani, ok þessa fám vér seint bót.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Góðr vinr, heyr hvat ek hugsá. Minn haukr fló á einn turn, ok er ek tók hann, sá ek eina fagra konu. Hon sat við einn gulligan borða ok las þar á mín liðin ok framkomin verk.'

Alsviðr svarar, 'Þú hefir sét Brynhildi Buðladóttur er mestr skqrungr er.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þat mun satt vera. Eða hversu ^b kom hon hér?'

Alsviðr svarar, 'Þess var skammt í milli ok þér kómuð.'

Sigurðr segir, 'Þat vissu vér fyrir fám dögum. Sú kona hefir oss bezt sýnzkt í veröldu.'

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads Viðrtal Sigurðar ok Brynhildar.*

^b *B conjectures hversu lqngu which gives better sense.*

welcomed him. Alsvið invited him to be his guest and to have anything he wanted, and this was accepted. Arrangements were made for him to be nobly waited on. Four men unloaded the gold from his horse, and a fifth attended him. Many precious and rare treasures were to be seen there. It was considered good sport to look at the hauberks and helmets, the big rings, the amazingly large golden goblets and weapons of every kind. Sigurd stayed there a long time and was held in great esteem. Word of his magnificent feat, the slaying of the terrible dragon, now spread through every country. They now had a good life and got on well together. They amused themselves by seeing to their weapons, making arrow-shafts and hawking.

25

At that time Brynhild, Heimir's foster-daughter, was back with him. She lived in her own quarters with her maidens. She was more skilled in the domestic arts than other women. She was working her tapestry with gold thread and embroidering on it the great deeds performed by Sigurd, the slaying of the dragon, the seizure of the treasure and the death of Regin. One day, as we are told, Sigurd rode to the forest with his hounds and hawks and a large body of men. On his return, his hawk flew up onto a high tower and settled near a window. Sigurd went after the hawk. Then he saw a good-looking woman and perceived that it was Brynhild who was there. Her good looks and her task made a deep impression on him. He entered the hall but would not join in the men's amusements.

'Why are you so silent?' said Alsvið then. 'This change in you worries us, your friends. Why can't you enjoy yourself? Your hawks are pining, and so is your horse, Grani, and we'll not find a speedy cure for it.'

'My good friend,' answered Sigurd, 'let me tell you what's on my mind. My hawk flew to a tower, and as I caught him I saw a beautiful woman. She was sitting over a golden tapestry, embroidering on it the deeds I've accomplished in the past.'

'You saw Budli's daughter, Brynhild,' replied Alsvið, 'a woman of real character and presence.'

'That's surely true,' answered Sigurd, 'but how did she get here?'

'There was but little time between your arrival and hers,' replied Alsvið.

'I knew that just a few days ago,' said Sigurd. 'She seemed to me the finest woman in the world.'

Alsviðr mælti, 'Gef ekki gaum at einni konu, þvílíkr maðr. Er þar illt at sýta er maðr fær eigi.'

'Hana skal ek hitta,' sagði Sigurðr, 'ok gefa henni gull ok ná hennar gamni ok jafnaðarpökka.'

Alsviðr svarar, 'Engi fannsk sá enn um aldr er hon léði rúms hjá sér eða gæfi ǫl at drekka. Hon vill sik í herskap hafa ok alls konar frægð at fremja.'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Vér vitum eigi hvárt hon svarar oss eða eigi eða lér oss sess hjá sér.'

Ok annan dag eptir gekk Sigurðr til skemmunnar. En Alsviðr stóð hjá skemmunni úti ok skepti ǫrvar sínar.

Sigurðr mælti, 'Sit heil, frú, eða hversu megi þér?'

Hon svarar, 'Vel megu vér, frændr lifa ok vinir, en háttung er í hverja giptu menn bera til síns endadags.'

Hann sezk hjá henni. Síðan ganga þar inn fjórar konur með stórum borðkerum af gulli ok með inu bezta víni ok standa fyrir þeim.

Þá mælti Brynhildr, 'Þetta sæti mun fáam veitt vera, nema faðir minn komi.'

Hann svarar, 'Nú er veitt þeim er oss líkar.'

Herbergit var tjaldat af inum dýrstum tjöldum ok þakit klæðum allt gólfitt.

Sigurðr mælti, 'Nú er þat fram komit er þér hétuð oss.'

Hon svarar, 'Þér skuluð hér velkomnir.'

Síðan reis hon upp ok fjórar meyjar með henni, ok gekk fyrir hann með gullker ok bað hann drekka. Hann réttir í mót hǫndina kerinu ok tók hǫnd hennar með ok setti hana hjá sér. Hann tók um hals henni ok kyssti hana ok mælti,

'Engi kona hefir þér fegri fæzk.'

Brynhildr mælti, 'Vitrígra ráð er þat at leggja eigi trúnað sinn á konu vald, því at þær rjúfa jafnan sín heit.'

Hann mælti, 'Sá kæmi beztr dagr yfir oss at vér mættim njótask.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Eigi er þat skipat at vit búim saman. Ek em skjaldmær,¹ ok á ek með herkonungum hjálm, ok þeim mun ek at liði verða, ok ekki er mér leitt at berjask.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þá frjóumsk vér mest ef vér búum saman, ok meira er at þola þann harm er hér liggr á en hvöss vápn.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ek mun kanna lið hermanna, en þú munt eiga Guðrúnu Gjúkadóttur.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Ekki tælir mik eins konungs dóttir, ok ekki lér

¹ See Glossary s.v. *valkyrja*

'A man like you shouldn't get interested in any one woman,' said Alsvið. 'It's bad to fret about what can't be had.'

'I shall go to her,' said Sigurd, 'and give her gold, and gain her delight and love.'

'She's never suffered any man to sit by her, or given him ale to drink,' replied Alsvið. 'She wants to be off to battle, and generally increase her fame.'

'I don't know if she'll reply, or not,' said Sigurd, 'or let me sit by her.'

The next day Sigurd went to the women's apartments, and Alsvið stood close by outside making arrow-shafts.

'Greetings, my lady,' said Sigurd. 'Is all well with you?'

'All is well,' she answered. 'My kinsmen and friends are alive. But none of us can tell what sort of luck we'll have down to the day we die.'

He sat down by her side. Then four women entered bearing large golden cups and the finest wine, and stood before them.

Then Brynhild said: 'Not many are given this seat, apart from when my father comes.'

'I'm pleased about the man who's got it now,' he answered.

The room was hung with the most costly tapestries, and the whole floor had coverings.

'Your promise to me is now fulfilled,' said Sigurd.

'You are welcome here,' she replied.

Then she arose, and the four maidens with her, and brought him a golden cup and told him to drink. He reached for the cup and at the same time took her hand and drew her down beside him. Embracing her, he kissed her and said:

'No woman born is lovelier than you.'

'Wiser not to surrender your trust to a woman, for they always break their vows,' said Brynhild.

'The day we wed would be our happiest,' he said.

'We're not fated to share our lives together,' Brynhild replied. 'I am a shield-maiden,¹ wearing a helmet along with warrior kings. I help them and I don't find battle distasteful.'

'We shall prosper best if we share our lives together,' answered Sigurd. 'The pain of all this is worse to bear than sharp weapons.'

'I shall muster the troops,' replied Brynhild, 'and you will marry Gudrun, Gjuki's daughter.'

'No king's daughter shall ensnare me,' replied Sigurd. 'I'm not

mér tveggja huga um þetta, ok þess sver ek við guðin at ek skal þik eiga eða enga konu ella.'

Hon mælti slíkt. Sigurðr þakkar henni þessi ummæli ok gaf henni gullhring, ok svorðu nú eiða af nýju, ok gengr hann í brott til sinna manna ok er þar um hríð með miklum blóma.

26

Gjúki ^a hét konungr. Hann hafði ríki fyrir sunnan Rín. Hann átti þrjá sonu er svá hétu : Gunnarr, Hogni, Guttormr.¹ Guðrún ² hét dóttir hans. Hon ^b var frægst mæ. Báru þau börn mjök af qðrum konunga börnum um alla atgervi, bæði um vænleik ok vøxt. Þeir vóru jafnan í hernaði ok unnu mörq ágætisverk. Gjúki átti Grímhildi ³ ina fjölkunngu.

Buðli ⁴ hét konungr. Hann var ríkari en Gjúki ok þó báðir ríkir. Atli ⁵ hét bróðir Brynhildar. Atli var grimmr maðr, mikill ok svartr ok þó tíguligr ok inn mesti hermaðr. Grímhildr var grimmhuguð kona. Ráð Gjúkunga stóð með miklum blóma ok mest fyrir sakir barna hans er mjök vóru umfram ^c flesta.

Eitt sinn segir Guðrún meyjum sínum at hon má eigi ^d glöð vera. Ein kona spyrr hana hvat henni sé at ógleði.

Hon svarar, ^e 'Eigi fengum vér tíma í draumum. Er því harmr í hjarta mér. Ráð ^f drauminn, þar er þú fréttir eptir.'

Hon svarar, 'Seg mér ok lát þik eigi hryggja, því at jafnan dreymir fyrir veðrum.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þetta er ekki veðr. Þat dreymði mik at ek sá einn fagran hauk mér á hendi. Fjaðrar hans vóru með gulligum lit.'

Konan svarar, 'Margir hafa spurt af yðrum vænleik, vizku ok kurteisi. Nøkkurs konungs sonr mun biðja þín.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Engi hlutr þótti mér haukinum betri, ok allt mitt fé vilda ek heldr láta en hann.'

Konan svarar, 'Sá er þú fær mun vera vel mennt, ok muntu unna honum mikit.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þat angrar mik at ek veit eigi hvern hann er, ok skulum vér hitta Brynhildi. Hon mun vita.'

Þær bjuggusk með gulli ok mikilli feqrð ok fóru með meyjum sínum,

^a The preceding ch. heading reads Frá Giúka konungi ok sonum.

^b thus Ol, hann V

^c um- illeg. V

^e hon svarar illeg. V

^d illeg. V

^f mér. Ráð illeg. V ; Ol doubtful

in two minds about this, and I swear by the gods that I either marry you or no one at all.'

She spoke to the same effect. Sigurd thanked her for what she had said and gave her a gold ring. Then they again repeated their vows, and Sigurd went off to his men and there he prospered for a time.

26

There was a king named Gjuki. His kingdom lay south of the Rhine. He had three sons called Gunnar, Hogni and Guttorm.¹ Gudrun² was his daughter, a maiden who was widely famed. The children outdid other kings' children in natural gifts and attainments, in good looks as in stature. They were always out raiding, and performed many brilliant feats. Gjuki's wife was Grimhild,³ a sorceress.

There was a king named Budli.⁴ He was more powerful than Gjuki, though both were powerful. Brynhild's brother was Atli,⁵ a stern man, tall and dark, but of noble bearing and a great warrior. Grimhild had an evil disposition. Gjuki's house prospered, and chiefly because of his children who outshone most people.

One day, Gudrun told her maids of honour that she couldn't be happy. One woman asked her what she was unhappy about.

'I had no luck in my dreams,' she replied, 'and so there is grief in my heart. Interpret the dream, since you ask about it.'

'Tell it me,' she replied, 'and don't worry, for dreams always mean storms.'

'This is no storm,' replied Gudrun. 'I dreamed I saw a splendid hawk on my hand. His plumage was gold in colour.'

'Many have heard of your beauty, wisdom and courtliness. Some king's son will ask for your hand,' answered the woman.

'I thought nothing finer than the hawk,' Gudrun replied, 'and I would rather have lost all my wealth than him.'

'You'll marry a manly husband,' answered the woman, 'and you'll love him dearly.'

'It worries me, not knowing who he is,' replied Gudrun. 'We will go to see Brynhild—she will know.'

They arrayed themselves in gold and many things of great beauty,

¹ For Gjuki and his sons see Introduction p. xxxii

² See Introduction pp. xv f., xxxi f.

³ See Introduction p. xvi, n. 1

⁴ He is probably a reflection of the historical Bleda, Attila's brother, who also appears in *NL* as Blödelín.

⁵ See Introduction p. xxxii

unz þær kómu at holl Brynhildar. Sú holl var búin með gulli ok stóð á einu bergi. Ok er sén er ferð þeira, þá er Brynhildi sagt at margar konur óku at borginni með gylltum vögnum.

‘ Þar mun vera Guðrún Gjúkadóttir,’ segir hon.^a ‘ Mik dreyndi um hana í nótt, ok gongum út í mót henni. Ekki sækja oss fríðari konur heim.’

Þær gengu út í móti þeim ok fognuðu vel. Þær gengu inn í þá ina fognu holl. Salrinn var skrifaðr innan ok mjök silfri búinn. Klæði váru breidd undir fætr þeim, ok þjónuðu allir þeim. Þær höfðu margs konar leika. Guðrún var fáorð.^b

Brynhildr mælti, ‘ Hví meg þér eigi gleði bella? Ger eigi þat. Skemtum oss allar saman ok ræðum um ríka konunga ok þeira stórvirki.’¹

‘ Gerum þat,’ segir Guðrún. ‘ Eða hverja veiztu fremsta konunga verit hafa?’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘ Sonu Hámundar,^c Haka ok Hagbarð. Þeir unnu mǫrg frægðarverk í hernaði.’

Guðrún svarar, ‘ Miklir váru þeir ok ágætir, en þó nam Sigarr systur þeira, en hefir aðra inni brennda, ok eru þeir seinir at hefna. Eða hví nefndir þú eigi bræðr mína, er nú þykkja fremstir menn?’

Brynhildr segir, ‘ Þat er í góðum efnum, en eigi eru þeir enn mjök reyndir, ok veit ek einn mjök af þeim bera, en þat er Sigurðr, sonr Sigmundar konungs. Hann var þá barn er hann drap sonu Hundings konungs ok hefndi fǫður síns ok Eylima, móðurfǫður síns.’³

Guðrún mælti, ‘ Hvat var til merkja um þat? Segir þú hann borinn, þá er faðir hans fell?’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘ Móðir hans gekk í valinn ok fann Sigmund konung sáran ok bauð at binda sár hans, en hann kvezk of gamall síðan at berjask, en bað hana við þat huggask at hon mundi æztan son ala, ok var þar spá spaks geta. Ok eptir andlát Sigmundar konungs fór hon með Álfí konungi, ok var Sigurðr þar upp fæddr í mikilli virðingu, ok vann hann mǫrg afreksverk á hverjum degi, ok er hann ágæztr maðr í veröldu.’

Guðrún mælti, ‘ Af ást hefir þú fréttum til hans haldit. En af því kom ek hér at segja þér drauma mína, er mér fengu mikillar áhyggju.’

^a segir hon *thus Ol, om. V*

^b Guðrún var fáorð *illeg. V*

^c *thus Ol, B who refer to S. Grundtvig, Danmarks gamle Folkeviser, I, 1853, 259, n. 1; om. V.*

¹ It was a by no means uncommon practice to pass the time in discussing and comparing the achievements of various outstanding personalities. Trouble often ensued.

and with their maids in waiting they set out and came to Brynhild's palace. The palace was ablaze with gold and stood on a hill. And when their approach was seen, Brynhild was told that many women were driving towards the castle in gilded carriages.

'Gjuki's daughter, Gudrun, must be there,' she said. 'I dreamed of her last night—let's go out to meet her. No lovelier women come to visit us.'

They went out and welcomed them. They entered the magnificent palace. There were paintings on the inside of the hall and it shone with silver. Floor coverings were spread beneath their feet, and everyone waited on them. They had all kinds of games. Gudrun had little to say.

'Why can't you be gay?' said Brynhild. 'Don't be like this. Let's all have a happy time together and talk about mighty kings and their great deeds.'¹

'Let's do that,' said Gudrun. 'Which kings do you feel were the most eminent?'

'The sons of Hamund,² Haki and Hagbard,' replied Brynhild. 'They performed many exploits in battle.'

'They were great and famous,' replied Gudrun, 'but Sigar took their sister, and burned to death another in her house, and they're slow about vengeance. Why didn't you mention my brothers who are now thought to be most eminent men?'

'That's true,' said Brynhild, 'but they are still rather untried and I know one man who quite outstrips them—Sigurd, King Sigmund's son. When he killed King Hunding's sons and avenged his father and Eylimi, his grandfather,³ he was still a child.'

'What was there to show that?'

'His mother went to the battle-field,' replied Brynhild, 'and found King Sigmund wounded and offered to bandage his wounds, but he said he was too old to fight again, and told her to take comfort from the fact that she would give birth to an outstanding son. And here a wise man's guess was second sight. And after King Sigmund's death she was with King Alf, and Sigurd was brought up there in high esteem, and he performed many great feats every day, and he's the most famous man in the world.'

'Love led you to find out about him,' said Gudrun, 'but I came to tell you my dreams—they cause me much anxiety.'

² Presumably Helgi's brother. The events referred to here are recounted by Saxo Grammaticus in Book VII of his History. ³ On his mother's side

Brynhildr svarar, 'Lát þik eigi slíkt angra. Ver með frændum þínum, er allir vilja þik gleðja.'

27

'Þat ^a dreymði mik,' sagði Guðrún, 'at vér gengum frá skemmu margar saman ok sáam einn mikinn hjórt. Hann bar langt af qðrum dýrum. Hár hans var af gulli. Vér vildum allar taka dýrit, en ek ein náða. Dýrit þótti mér qllum hlutum betra. Síðan skauztu dýrit fyrir knjám mér. Var mér þat svá mikill harmr, at ek máttu trautt bera. Síðan gaftu mér einn úlfhvelp. Sá dreifði mik blóði bræðra minna.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ek mun ráða sem eptir mun ganga. Til ykkar mun koma Sigurðr, sá er ek kaus mér til manns. Grímhildr gefr honum meinblandinn mjöð er qllum oss kemr í ^b mikit stríð. Hann muntu eiga ok hann skjótt missa. Þú munt eiga Atla konung. Missa muntu bræðra þinna, ok þá muntu Atla vega.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ofrharmr er oss þat at vita slíkt.' Ok fara þær nú í brott ok heim til Gjúka konungs.

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Sigurðr ^c ríðr nú í brott með þat mikla gull. Skiljask þeir nú vinir. Hann ríðr Grana með qllum sínum herbúnaði ok farmi. Hann ríðr þar til er hann kom at hqll Gjúka konungs. Ríðr nú í borgina. Ok þat sér einn af konungs mǫnnum ok mælti,

'Þat hygg ek at hér fari einn af goðunum. Þessi maðr er allr við gull búinn. Hestr hans er miklu meiri en aðrir hestar, ok afburðarvænn vápnabúnaðr. Hann er langt um aðra menn fram, en sjálfr berr hann þó mest af qðrum ^a mǫnnum.'

Konungrinn gengr út með hirð sína ok kvaddi manninn ok ^e spyrr, 'Hverr ertu, er ríðr í borgina, er engi þorði nema at leyfi sona ^f minna?'

Hann svarar, 'Ek heiti Sigurðr, ok em ek sonr Sigmundar konungs.'

Gjúki konungr mælti, ^g 'Vel skaltu hér kominn með oss, ok þigg hér slíkt sem þú vill.'

Ok hann gengr inn í hqllina, ok váru allir lágir hjá honum, ok allir þjónuðu honum, ok var ^h hann þar í miklu yfirlæti. Þeir ríða allir

^a The preceding ch. heading reads Draumr Guðrúnar ráðinn af Brynhildi.

^b illeg. V

^c The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurði var blandat ómínnisq.

^d -um illeg. V

^e illeg. V

^f illeg. V

^g illeg. V

^h illeg. V

‘Don’t let such things worry you,’ replied Brynhild. ‘Stay among your family who all want to make you happy.’

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‘I dreamed,’ said Gudrun, ‘that a good number of us left our quarters, and we saw a great stag. It was far superior to other deer. Its hair was golden. We all wanted to capture that deer, but I alone managed it. The deer seemed to me more precious than anything else. Then you shot down the deer at my feet. At this, my grief was so great that I could hardly bear it. Then you gave me a wolf cub. It spattered me with my brothers’ blood.’

‘I’ll interpret it just as it will come to pass,’ Brynhild answered. ‘Sigurd, whom I chose as my husband, will come to you. Grimhild will give him drugged mead. This will bring great sorrow to us all. You will marry him and soon lose him. Then you will marry King Atli. You will lose your brothers and then kill Atli.’

‘To know such things overwhelms me with grief,’ answered Gudrun. And now they went away back to King Gjuki.

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Sigurd now rode away with all the gold. They now parted as friends. He rode Grani with all his gear and equipment. He rode until he came to King Gjuki’s hall. He now rode into the castle. One of the king’s men saw this and said :

‘I think one of the gods is approaching. This man is gold all over. His horse is far bigger than other horses. His weapons and armour are magnificent. He leaves other men far behind and he himself most surpasses other men.’

The king went out with his retainers and addressed the man :

‘Who are you,’ he asked, ‘riding into the castle, which no one has dared to do without my sons’ leave?’

‘I am Sigurd,’ he answered, ‘son of King Sigmund.’

‘You’re welcome among us here,’ said King Gjuki. ‘Whatever you want is yours.’

And he went into the hall and they were all short when compared to him, and they all waited on him, and he was held there in great

saman, Sigurðr ok Gunnarr ok Hǫgni, ok þó er Sigurðr fyrir þeim um alla atgerði, ok eru þó allir miklir menn fyrir sér.

Þat finnr Grímhildr hvé mikit Sigurðr ann Brynhildi, ok hvé opt ^a hann getr hennar; hugsar fyrir sér at þat væri meiri gipta at hann staðfestisk þar ok ætti dóttur Gjúka konungs, ok sá at engi mátti við hann jafnask, sá ok hvert traust at honum var, ok hafði ofr fjár, miklu meira en menn vissi dæmi til. Konungr var við hann sem við sonu sína, en þeir virðu hann framar en sik.

Eitt kveld er þeir sátu við drykk, ríss dróttning upp ok gekk fyrir Sigurð ok kvaddi hann ok mælti,

‘Fǫgnuðr er oss á þinni hérvist, ok allt gott viljum vér til yðar leggja. Tak hér við horni ok drekk.’

Hann tók við ok drakk af.

Hon mælti, ‘Þinn faðir skal vera Gjúki konungr, en ek móðir, bræðr þínir Gunnarr ok Hǫgni ok allir er eiða vinnið, ok munu þá eigi yðrir jafningjar fásk.’

Sigurðr tók því vel, ok við þann drykk munði hann ekki til Brynhildar. Hann dvalðisk þar um hríð.

Ok eitt sinn gekk Grímhildr fyrir Gjúka konung ok lagði hendr um háls honum ok mælti,

‘Hér er nú kominn inn mesti kappi er finnask mun í veröldu. Væri at honum mikit traust. Gipt honum dóttur þína með miklu fé ok slíku ríki sem hann vill, ok mætti hann hér ynði nema.’

Konungr svarar, ‘Fátítt er þat at bjóða fram dætr sínar, en meiri vegr er at bjóða honum en aðrir biði.’

Ok eitt kveld skenkir Guðrún. Sigurðr sér at hon er væn kona ok at öllu in kurteisasta. Fimm misseri var Sigurðr þar svá at þeir sátu með frægð ok vingan, ok ræðask konungar nú við.

Gjúki konungr mælti, ‘Mart gott veitir þú oss, Sigurðr, ok mjök hefir þú styrkt vart ríki.’

Gunnarr mælti, ‘Allt viljum vér til vinna at þér dvelizk hér lengi, bæði ríki ok vára systur með boði, en eigi mundi annarr fá, þótt bæði.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Hafið þökk fyrir yðra sæmð, ok þetta skal þiggja.’

Þeir sverjask nú í bræðralag, sem þeir sé sambornir bræðr. Nú er ger ágætlig veizla ok stóð marga daga. Drekkir Sigurðr nú brúðlaup til Guðrúnar. Mátti þar sjá margs konar gleði ok skemtan, ok var hvern dag veitt qðrum betr. Þeir fóru nú víða um lönd ok vinna mǫrg

^a Only op legible. Ol reads opp and emends to opt.

honour. Sigurd, Gunnar and Hogni all rode together, but Sigurd's accomplishments went far beyond theirs, though they were all great men.

Grimhild noticed how deeply Sigurd loved Brynhild, and how often he talked of her. She thought that it would be a good thing if he settled there and married King Gjuki's daughter, and she saw how no one could claim to be his equal, and what an asset he was, having immense wealth, far greater than any heard of before. The king treated him like one of his sons, and they reckoned him more outstanding than they were themselves.

One evening as they sat drinking, the queen got up, went to Sigurd and addressing him said :

'We are delighted that you are here. We wish to give you all that's good. Take this horn and drink.'

He took it and drank it off.

'King Gjuki shall be your father and I your mother,' she said, 'and Gunnar and Hogni, and all who take the oaths, shall be your brothers, then none will be found to equal you.'

Sigurd took this well, and with that drink he lost all memory of Brynhild. He stayed there for a time.

One day Grimhild went to King Gjuki, embraced him and said :

'The greatest champion to be found anywhere in the world is here with us now. He would prove a great asset. Give him your daughter in marriage, a large sum of money and whatever dignities he would like, and perhaps he will live here happily.'

'It's unusual to offer a daughter's hand, but to offer it to him is a greater honour than for others to ask for it,' the king answered.

One evening Gudrun was serving wine. Sigurd saw that she was a beautiful woman and most courtly in every way. Sigurd was there for two and a half years, and they thus lived in amity and were widely spoken of—and the kings were now conversing :

'You're doing a great deal for us, Sigurd,' said King Gjuki, 'and you've greatly strengthened our power.'

'We'll do anything to persuade you to stay here a long time,' said Gunnar. 'Dignities, and the offer of our sister's hand—no one else would be granted it, even if he asked.'

'Thank you for the honour you do me,' replied Sigurd. 'I accept.'

They now swore to be brothers as if born of the same parents. A sumptuous feast was now prepared and it lasted many days. And Sigurd now married Gudrun. Many different amusements and entertainments were to be found there and each day's feasting was better than the last. They now roamed far and wide, performing many glorious

frægðarverk, drápu marga konungasonu, ok engir menn gerðu slík afrek sem þeir ; fara nú heim með miklu herfangi. Sigurðr gaf Guðrúnu at eta af Fáfnis hjarta, ok síðan var hon miklu grimhari en áðr ok vitrari. Þeira sonr hét Sigmundr.

Ok eitt sinn gekk Grímhildr at Gunnari, syni sínum, ok mælti,
 ‘Yðart ráð stendr með miklum blóma fyrir útan einn hlut, er þér eruð kvánlausir. Biðið Brynhildar. Þat er gofgast ráð, ok mun Sigurðr ríða með yðr.’

Gunnarr svarar, ‘Víst er hon væn, ok eigi em ek þessa ófúss’,—ok segir nú feðr sínum ok bræðrum ok Sigurði, ok eru allir fýsandi

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Þeir ^a búa nú ferð sína listuliga, ríða nú fjöll ok dali til Buðla konungs. Bera upp bónorðit. Hann tók því vel, ef hon vill eigi níta, ok segir hana svá stóra at þann einn mann mun hon eiga er hon vill. Þá ríða þeir í Hlymdali. Heimir fagnar þeim vel. Segir Gunnarr nú ørendin. Heimir kvað hennar kjör vera, hvern hon skal eiga. Segir þar sal hennar skammt frá, ok kvazk þat hyggja at þann einn mundi hon eiga vilja er riði eld brennanda er sleginn er um sal hennar. Þeir finna salinn ok eldinn ok sjá þar borg gulli bysta, ok brann eldr um útan. Gunnarr reið Gota, en Hogni Hólkvi. Gunnarr keyrir hestinn at eldinum, en hann hopar.

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Hví hopar þú, Gunnarr?’

Hann svarar, ‘Eigi vill hestrinn hlaupa þenna eld,’ ok biðr Sigurðr ljá sér Grana.

‘Heimult er þat,’ segir Sigurðr.

Gunnarr ríðr nú at eldinum, ok vill Grani eigi ganga. Gunnarr má nú eigi ríða þenna eld. Skipta nú litum, sem Grímhildr kenndi þeim Sigurði ok Gunnari. Síðan ríðr Sigurðr ok hefir Gram í hendi ok bindr gullspora á fœtr sér. Grani hleypr fram at eldinum er hann kenndi sporans. Nú verðr gnýr mikill er eldrinn tók at æsask, en jörð tók at skjálfa. Loginn stóð við himin. Þetta þorði engi at gera fyrr, ok var sem hann riði í myrkva. Þá lægðisk eldrinn, en hann gekk af hestinum inn í salinn.

Svá er kveðit ^b:

^a The preceding ch. heading reads Sigurðr reið vafrologan Brynhildar Buðladóttur.

^b er kveðit illeg. V

deeds, killing many princes, and no one accomplished such great feats as they did. They now returned home with much booty. Sigurd gave Gudrun some of Fafnir's heart to eat, and she was then far grimmer than before, and wiser, too. Their son's name was Sigmund.

Grimhild went one day to her son, Gunnar.

'Your affairs are flourishing,' she said, 'except in one particular—you've no wife. Ask for Brynhild's hand; it will be a splendid match, and Sigurd will ride with you.'

'She's certainly beautiful,' replied Gunnar, 'and I'm nothing loath.'

And then he told his father, his brothers and Sigurd, and they were all strongly in favour.

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They now prepared carefully for their journey. Then they rode over hill and dale to King Budli. They put forward their proposal. He received it favourably, provided that she did not refuse, saying she was so proud that she would only marry the man of her choice. Then they rode to Hlymdalir. Heimir gave them a hearty welcome. Gunnar explained their business. Heimir said that hers was the decision as to whom she should marry. Then he said that her hall was a short way off and gave his opinion that she would only marry the man who rode through the burning fire that surrounded her hall. They found the hall and the fire, and what they saw was a stronghold, its gable-head mounted in gold, and fire burning all round it. Gunnar rode Goti and Hogni rode Holkvir. Gunnar spurred on his horse towards the fire, but he shied back.

'Why shy back, Gunnar?' said Sigurd.

'The horse won't leap the fire,' he answered, and he asked Sigurd to lend him Grani.

'By all means,' said Sigurd.

Gunnar then rode at the fire, but Grani wouldn't go on. So Gunnar could not ride through the fire. Sigurd and Gunnar then exchanged appearances as Grimhild had taught them. Then Sigurd rode with Gram in hand and golden spurs bound on his heels. Grani charged at the fire when he felt the spur. Then there came a mighty roar as the fire began to rage and the earth to tremble. The flames mounted to the sky. No one had dared do this before, and it was like riding in dense fog. Then the fire died down and dismounting he entered the hall.

As is said :

(22) Eldr ^a nam ^b at æsask
 en jörð at skjálfa
 ok hár logi
 við himni gnæfa.
 Fár treystisk þar
 fylkis rekka
 eld at riða
 né yfir stíga.

(23) Sigurðr Grana
 sverði keyrði.
 Eldr sloknaði
 fyrir oðlingi,
 logi allr lægðisk
 fyrir lofgjörnum.
 Bliku reiði,^c
 er Reginn átti.

Ok er Sigurðr kom inn um logann, fann hann þar eitt fagrt herbergi, ok þar sat í Brynhildr. Hon spyr hvern sá maðr er. En hann nefndisk Gunnarr Gjúkason—

‘Ertu ok ætluð mín kona með jáyrði feðr þíns, ef ek riða þinn vafrloga,¹ ok fóstra þíns með yðru atkvæði.’

‘Eigi veit ek gerla hversu ek skal þessu svara,’ segir hon.^d

Sigurðr stóð rétt á gólfinu ok studdisk á sverðshjöltin ok mælti til Brynhildar,

‘Þér í mót skal ek gjalda mikinn mund í gulli ok góðum gripum.’

Hon svarar af áhyggju af sínu sæti sem álpt af báru ok hefir sverð í hendi ok hjálm á höfði ok var í brynju :

‘Gunnarr,’ segir hon, ‘ræð ekki slíkt við mik, nema þú sér hverjum manni fremri, ok þá skaltu drepa er mín hafa beðit, ef þú hefir traust til. Ek var í orrostu með Garðakonungi,² ok váru vápn vár lituð í manna-blóði, ok þess girnumk vér enn.’

Hann svarar, ‘Mörg stórvirki hafi þér unnit, en minnisk nú á heit yður, ef þessi eldr væri riðinn, at þér mundið með þeim manni ganga er þetta gerði.’

Hon finnr nú hér sonn svor ok merki þessa máls, stendr upp ok

^a El- *illeg. V*

^b *thus Ol, man V*

^c *thus Ol, reið V*

^d *segir hon Ol, om. V*

(22) The fire grew great,
 the ground did shake
 and tall flame
 towered to the sky.
 Few warrior kings
 were willing to ride
 or fare onwards through
 the fire's rage.

(23) With sword did Sigurd
 spur Grani onwards.
 Before the prince
 the fire then died.
 The flames all ceased
 for the seeker of glory,
 resplendent the harness
 Regin had owned.

And when Sigurd went in past the flames he found a fine dwelling, and Brynhild was sitting within. She asked who the man was. He said he was Gunnar, Gjuki's son.

'And you are to be my wife—your father consented if I rode through your leaping flames,¹ as did your foster-father, if you so decided.'

'I hardly know how to answer', she said.

Sigurd stood erect on the floor, leaning on the hilt of his sword, and said to Brynhild :

'In return I shall make you a large marriage-settlement in valuables and gold.'

From her seat like a swan on the wave she made solemn reply. She had sword in hand, a helm on her head, and she was clad in armour.

'Gunnar,' she said, 'do not talk to me of this, unless you are a better man than any other, and you must kill all who have asked for my hand, if you're resolute enough. I have fought in battle with the King of Gardariki,² and my weapons were stained with men's blood, and this is what I still long for.'

'You have performed many great deeds,' he replied, 'but now think of your oath, that if any one rode through the fire you would go with the man who did so.'

She realised that what he said was true and saw the point of his

¹ It was her foster-father, Heimir, who mentioned flames see (p. 48).

² *Gardariki* or *Gardar* was the kingdom created by the Swedish Varangians in Russia.

fagnar ^a honum vel. Þar dvelsk hann þrjár nætr, ok búa eina rekkju.^b Hann tekr sverðit Gram ok leggr í meðal þeira bert. Hon spyr hví þat sætti. Hann kvað sér þat skipat at svá gerði hann brúðlaup til konu sinnar eða fengi ella bana. Hann tók þá af henni hringinn Andvaranaut er hann gaf henni, en fekk henni nú annan hring af Fáfni arfi. Eptir þetta ríðr hann brott í þann sama eld til sinna féлага, ok skipta þeir aprt litum ok ríða síðan í Hlymdali ok segja hvé farit hafði. Þann sama dag fór ^c Brynhildr heim ^d til fóstura síns ok segir honum af trúnaði at til hennar kom einn konungr—

‘ Ok reið minn ^e vafrlaga ok kvazk kominn til ráða við mik ok nefndisk Gunnarr. En ek sagða ^f at þat mundi Sigurðr einn gera, er ek vann eiða á fjallinu, ok er hann minn frumverr.’ ^g

Heimir kvað nú svá búit vera mundu.

Brynhildr mælti, ‘ Dóttur okkar Sigurðar, Áslaugu, ^h skal hér ⁱ upp fæða með þér.’

Fara konungar nú heim, en Brynhildr fór til feðr síns. Grímhildr ^j fagnar þeim vel ok þakkar Sigurði sína fylgð. Er þar búizk við veizlu. Kom þar mikill mannfjöldi. Þar kom Buðli konungr með dóttur sína, ok Atli, sonr hans, ok hefir þessi veizla staðit marga daga. Ok er lokit er þessi veizlu, minnir Sigurð allra eiða við Brynhildi ok lætr þó vera kyrt. Brynhildr ok Gunnarr sátu við skemtan ok drukku gott vín.

30

Þat ^k er einn dag er þær gengu til árinna Rínar ^l at þvá sér, ^m þá óð Brynhildr lengra út á ána. Guðrún spyr hví þat gegndi.

Brynhildr segir, ‘ Hví skal ek um þetta jafnask við þik heldr en um annat? Ek hugða ⁿ at minn faðir væri ríkari en þinn, ok minn maðr unnit mǫrg ^o snildarverk ^p ok riði eld brennanda, en þinn bóndi var þræll Hjálpreks ^q konungs.’

Guðrún svarar með reiði, ‘ Þá værir þú vitrari ef þú þegðir ^r en lastaðir mann minn. Er þat allra manna mál at engi hafi slíkr komit í veröldina fyrir hversvetna sakir, ok eigi samir þér vel at lasta hann, því at hann er þinn frumverr, ok drap hann Fáfni ok reið vafrlagann, er þú

^a *illeg. V* ^b -ju *illeg. V* ^c -ór *illeg. V*
^d -eim *illeg. V* ^e -inn *illeg. V* ^f -þa *illeg. V*
^g *illeg. V* ^h skal hér *illeg. V* ⁱ -rímhildr *illeg. V*
^j *The preceding ch. heading illeg.; Ol reads Deild dróttninganna Brynhildar ok Guðrúnar.* ^k *illegible for B who suspects Samr and reads saman.*
^l þvá sér *illeg. V* ^m *illeg. V* ⁿ -ǫrg *illeg. V*
^o sn- *illeg. V* ^p þræll Hjá *illeg. V* ^q þeg- *illeg.*

answer. She arose and made him welcome. He stayed there three nights and they shared the same bed. He took the sword Gram and laid it naked between them. She asked the reason. He said it was ordained that he should marry his wife in this way, or else die. Then he took from her the ring Andvaranaut which he had given her, and gave her another from Fafnir's inheritance. After this he rode off into the fire and to his comrades. They changed back their appearances and then rode to Hlymdalir and told how things had gone. That same day Brynhild went back to her foster-father's and told him in confidence that a king had come to her—

'And he rode through my leaping flames, and said he had come to make me his own, and that his name was Gunnar. But I said that Sigurd alone would do this, he to whom I gave my vows on the mountain—he is my first lover.'

Heimir then said that things would have to stay as they were.

'Aslaug,¹ Sigurd's daughter and mine, shall be brought up here with you,' said Brynhild.

The kings now returned and Brynhild went to her father's. Grimhild welcomed them and thanked Sigurd for his help. Preparations were then made for a feast. A large number of people arrived. King Budli came with his daughter, and his son, Atli, came. The feast lasted many days. And when it was over, Sigurd remembered all his vows to Brynhild, but he gave no sign. Brynhild and Gunnar sat enjoying themselves and drank good wine.

30

One day they went to bathe in the river Rhine. Brynhild then waded out farthest in the river. Gudrun asked what this meant.

'Why should I think we're of equal standing in this more than in anything else?' said Brynhild. 'I thought my father was more powerful than yours, and that my husband had performed many outstanding feats, and rode through the burning fire, while your husband was King Hjalprek's thrall.'

'You'd be wiser to hold your peace,' answered Gudrun angrily, 'than to speak slightingly of my husband. Everyone says that no man born into this world is in any way like him. And it is not fitting for you to speak slightingly of him, for he is your lover, and he killed Fafnir and rode through the leaping flames when you thought it was King

¹ See Introduction pp. xv, xxxvii and Appendix B

hugðir Gunnar konung, ok hann lá hjá þér ok tók af hendi þér hringinn Andvaranaut, ok máttu nú hér hann kenna.'

Brynhildr sér nú þenna hring ok kennir. Þá fagnar hon, sem ^a hon dauð væri. Brynhildr fór heim ok mælti ekki orð um kveldit. Ok er Sigurðr kom í rekkju, spyr Guðrún,

'Hví er Brynhildr svá ókát?'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi veit ek glöggt, en grunar mik at vér munum vita brátt nokkuru gerr.'

Guðrún mælti, 'Hví unir hon eigi auð ok sælu ok allra manna lofi, ok fengit þann mann sem hon vildi?'

Sigurðr mælti, 'Hvar var hon þá er hon sagði þat, at hon þættisk inn æzta eiga eða þann er hon vildi helzt eiga?'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ek skal eptir spyrja á morgin hvern hon vill helzt eiga.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Þess let ek þik, ok iðrask muntu ef þú gerir þat.'

Ok um morgininn sátu þær í skemmu sinni, ok var Brynhildr hljóð. Þá mælti Guðrún,

'Ver kát, Brynhildr. Angrar þik okkart viðtál? Eða hvat stendr þér fyrir gamni?'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Illt eitt gengr þér til þessa, ok hefir þú grimmt hjarta.'

'Virð eigi svá,' segir Guðrún, 'ok seg heldr.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Spyr þess eina at betr sé attu vitir. Þat samir ríkum konum. Ok er gott góðu at una, er yðr gengr allt at óskum.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Sneft er því enn at hœla, ok er þetta nokkur sú forspá. Hvat reki þér at oss? Vér gerðum yðr ekki til angrs.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Þess skaltu gjalda er þú átt Sigurð, ok ek ann þér eigi hans at njóta né gullsins mikla.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Eigi vissa ek yður ummæli, ok vel mætti faðir minn sjá ráð fyrir mér, þóttu værir ekki at hitt.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ekki hofum vér launmæli haft ok þó hofum vit eiða svarit, ok vissu þér þat, at þér véltuð mik, ok þess skal hefna.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Þú ert betr gefin en makligt er, ok þinn ofsi mun illa sjatna, ok þess munu margir gjalda.'

'Una mundu vér,' segir Brynhildr, 'ef eigi ættir þú gofgara mann.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Áttu svá gofgan mann at óvíst er hverr meiri konungr er, ok gnótt fjár ok ríkis.'

^a hon, sem *illeg. V*

Gunnar, and he slept with you and took from your arm the ring Andvaranaut, and here—now you can see for yourself !’

Brynhild then saw the ring and recognised it. Then she turned deathly pale. Brynhild went back and did not utter a word that evening. And when Sigurd went to bed, Gudrun asked :

‘ Why is Brynhild so dejected ? ’

‘ I don’t know for sure’, answered Sigurd, ‘ but I suspect we shall soon know rather more fully.’

‘ Why isn’t she content with wealth and happiness, with praise from everyone, and with getting the husband she wanted ? ’ said Gudrun.

‘ Where was she when she said she thought she had the most distinguished husband, or the one she most wanted ? ’ said Sigurd.

‘ Tomorrow I’ll ask whom she would most like to have,’ replied Gudrun.

‘ I advise you not to do that,’ answered Sigurd. ‘ You’ll regret it if you do.’

And in the morning they were sitting in their private quarters and Brynhild was silent. Then Gudrun said :

‘ Be cheerful, Brynhild. Are you upset because of our conversation, or what is it that stops you from being happy ? ’

‘ This is prompted by nothing but malice,’ replied Brynhild, ‘ and you have a cruel heart.’

‘ Don’t talk like that,’ said Gudrun, ‘ and instead tell me.’

‘ Only ask about what is good for you to know,’ replied Brynhild. ‘ That is fitting for women of rank, and it’s good to be content with good things—when everything’s going as you’d wish.’

‘ It’s early yet to boast of that,’ replied Gudrun, ‘ and there’s something prophetic in this. What do you reproach me with ? I’ve done nothing to cause you grief.’

‘ You’ll pay for having Sigurd,’ replied Brynhild. ‘ I grudge your enjoyment of him, and of all the gold.’

‘ I knew nothing of the vow you’d made,’ answered Gudrun, ‘ and my father could surely arrange my marriage without consulting you.’

‘ What we said was no secret, making vows as we did, and you knew you were playing me false, but I’ll be revenged’, answered Brynhild.

‘ You’ve made a better match than you deserve’, replied Gudrun. ‘ But your pride won’t abate without mischief, and many will pay for it.’

‘ I’d be content,’ said Brynhild, ‘ if only you didn’t have the more eminent husband.’

‘ Your husband is so eminent,’ replied Gudrun, ‘ that none can say who is a greater king, with wealth and power in plenty, too.’

Brynhildr svarar, 'Sigurðr vá at Fáfni, ok er þat meira vert en allt ríki Gunnars konungs,'—svá sem kveðit er :

(24) Sigurðr vá at ormi,
 en þat síðan mun
 engum fyrnask,
 meðan öld lifir.
 En hlýri þinn
 hvárki þorði
 eld at ríða
 né yfir stíga.

Guðrún svarar, 'Grani rann eigi eldinn undir Gunnari konungi, en hann þorði at ríða, ok þarf honum eigi hugar at frýja.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Dyljumk^a eigi við at ek hygg Grímhildi eigi vel.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Ámæl henni eigi, því at hon er til þín sem til dóttur sinnar.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Hon veldr öllum upphöfum þess bóls er oss bítr. Hon bar Sigurði grimmt öl, svá at eigi munði hann mitt nafn.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Mart rangt orð mælir þú, ok mikil lygi er slíkt.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Njóti þér svá Sigurðar sem þér hafð mik eigi svikit, ok er yðart samveldi ómakligt, ok gangi yðr svá sem ek hygg.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Betr mun ek njóta en þú mundir vilja, ok engi gat þess, at hann ætti of gott við mik né eitt sinn.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Illa mælir þú, ok er af þér rennr, muntu iðrask, ok hendum eigi heiptyrði.'

Guðrún segir, 'Þú kastaðir fyrri heiptarorðum á mik. Lætr þú nú sem þú munir yfir bæta, en þó býr grimmt undir.'

'Leggjum niðr ónýtt hjal,' segir Brynhildr. 'Ek þagða lengi yfir mínum harmi, þeim er mér bjó í brjósti, en ek ann þínum bróður at eins, ok tókum annat tal.'

Guðrún segir, 'Langt sér hugr þinn um fram.'

Ok þar af stóð mikill ófagnaðr, er þær gengu á ána ok hon kenndi hringinn, ok þar af varð þeira viðræða.

^a thus Ol, dyljisk V

‘Sigurd struck at Fafnir,’ replied Brynhild, ‘and that’s worth more than all King Gunnar’s power. As the poem says :

(24) Sigurd struck at the dragon
 that deed shall be told
 for as long as ever
 there’s life on earth.
 No wish had your brother
 to win over
 or fare onwards through
 the fire’s rage.

‘Grani did not gallop through the fire when King Gunnar mounted, but he essayed the ride, and his courage can’t be called in question,’ replied Gudrun.

‘I can’t pretend that I’m well disposed towards Grimhild,’ answered Brynhild.

‘Don’t blame her,’ replied Gudrun, ‘for she treats you like a daughter.’

‘She is responsible for the whole onset of the misfortune now afflicting us,’ answered Brynhild. ‘She brought Sigurd a harmful draught of ale so that he couldn’t recall my name.’

‘You’re telling a lot of untruths,’ said Gudrun. ‘It’s a monstrous lie.’

‘Enjoy Sigurd to the extent you’ve not deceived me—you don’t deserve your life together, and I hope things turn out for you as I expect,’ replied Brynhild.

‘I’ll enjoy him more than you’d like,’ answered Gudrun, ‘and no one thought he’d been over intimate with me, not once.’

‘You’re talking offensively, and when you’re calmer you’ll be sorry,’ replied Brynhild. ‘Let’s not indulge in spiteful language.’

‘You first hurled spiteful words at me,’ said Gudrun. ‘Now you act as if you’ll put things right, but there’s malice behind it all.’

‘Let’s have done with this pointless chatter,’ said Brynhild. ‘For a long time I kept silent about the grief that was in my heart, and I love no one but your brother, and let’s talk of something else.’

‘Your thoughts are looking far beyond this,’ said Gudrun.

And much unhappiness came about because they went to the river and she recognised the ring which led to their conversation.

Eptir ^a þetta tal leggsk Brynhildr í rekkju, ok kómu þessi tíðendi fyrir Gunnar konung, at Brynhildr er sjúk. Hann hittir hana ok spyrr hvat henni sé, en hon svarar engu ok liggr sem hon sé dauð. Ok er harln leitar eptir fast, þá svarar hon,

‘Hvat gerðir þú af hring þeim er ek selda þér, er Buðli konungr gaf mér at efsta skilnaði, er þér synir Gjúka konungs ^b kómuð til hans ok hétuð at herja eða brenna, nema þér næðið mér? Síðan leiddi hann mik á tal, ok spyrr hvern ek kœra af þeim sem komnir váru, en ek buðumk til at verja landit ok vera höfðingi yfir þriðjungi liðs. Váru þá tveir kostir fyrir hendi, at ek munda þeim verða at giptask sem hann vildi, eða vera án alls fjár ok hans vináttu; kvað þó sína vináttu mér mundu betr gegna en reiði. Þá hugsaða ek með mér, hvárt ek skylda hlýða ^c hans vilja eða drepa margan mann. Ek þóttumk vanfœr til at þreyta við hann, ok þar kom at ek hétumsk þeim er riði hestinum Grana með Fáfnis arfi ok riði minn vafrloga ok dræpi þá menn er ek kvað á. Nú treystisk engi at ríða nema Sigurðr einn. Hann reið eldinn, því at hann skorti eigi hug til. Hann drap orminn ok Regin ok fimm konunga, en eigi þú, Gunnarr, er þú fólnaðir sem nár, ok ertu engi konungr né kappi. Ok þess strengða ek heit heima at feðr míns, at ek munda þeim einum unna, er ágæztr væri alinn, en þat er Sigurðr. Nú erum vér eiðrofa, er vér eigum hann eigi, ok fyrir þetta skal ek ráðandi þíns dauða. Ok eigum vér Grímhildi illt at launa. Henni finnsk engi kona huglausari né verri.’

Gunnarr svarar svá at fáir heyrðu,

‘Morg flærðarorð hefir þú mælt, ok ertu illúðig kona, er þú ámælis þeiri konu er mjök er um þik fram, ok eigi ynði ^a hon verr sínu, svá sem þú gerir, eða kvalði dauða menn, ok engan myrði hon, ok lifir við lof.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Ekki höfum vér launþing haft né ódádír gert, ok annat er vart eðli, ok fúsari værim vér at drepa yðr.’

Síðan vildi hon drepa Gunnar konung, en Högni setti hana í fjotra.

Gunnarr mælti þá,

‘Eigi vil ek at hon búi í fjotrúm.’

Hon svarar, ‘Hirð eigi þat, því at aldri sér þú mik glaða síðan í

^a *Ol reads the preceding ch. heading as Harmr Brynhildar vóx at eins; Harmr now illeg.*

^b *synir Gjúka konungs, thus Ol (cf. same phrase p. 55), Gjúkungar B (cf. Sig. in skam. 35), Gjúki konungr V.*

^c *thus Ol, om. V*

^d *thus Ol, ynði V*

After their talk, Brynhild took to her bed, and Gunnar heard the news that Brynhild was ill. He visited her and asked what was the matter. But she made no reply and lay like one dead. But when he pressed his question, she answered :

‘What did you do with the ring I gave you, King Budli’s gift to me at our last parting, when you sons of King Gjuki came to him, swearing to harry and burn if you didn’t get me? Then he took me aside and asked which one I chose from those who’d come. But I offered to defend the country and command a third of the army. There were then two alternatives to hand : I had to marry the one, as he desired, or lose all my wealth and his favour, and he said his favour would serve me better than his anger. Then I deliberated whether to bow to his will, or kill many men. I considered I was incapable of fighting him, and so I promised to marry the man who would ride the steed Grani with Fafnir’s inheritance, and ride through my leaping flames, and kill the men I named. Now none dared the ride save Sigurd alone. He rode through the fire, for he did not lack the courage for the feat. He it was who killed the dragon, and Regin and five kings—and not you, Gunnar, for you turned pale as a corpse, and you’re no king, nor a hero. And back at my father’s I swore I would love only the noblest man born, and that is Sigurd. Now I am perjured, for he is not mine, and for this reason I shall be the cause of your death. And I’ve to pay back Grimhild for her malice. There’s no woman more cowardly or worse than she is.’

Gunnar answered so that not many heard :

‘You’ve made a lot of lying statements, and it’s wicked of you to speak ill of a woman who is far superior to you—she wasn’t badly discontented with her lot as you are, nor has she tormented dead men, nor murdered anyone, and she is held in esteem.’

‘I’ve held no secret meetings,’ replied Brynhild, ‘nor committed any outrage—that’s not my nature—but I’d be quite ready to kill you.’

Then she would have killed King Gunnar, but Hogni put her in chains.

Then said Gunnar :

‘It’s not my wish that she should be in chains.’

‘Pay no heed to that,’ she answered, ‘for you’ll never again see

þinni holl eða drekka né tefla né hugat mæla né gulli leggja góð klæði né yðr ráð gefa.'

Kvað hon sér þat mestan harm at hon átti eigi Sigurð. Hon settisk upp ok sló sinn borða svá at sundr gekk, ok það svá lúka skemmudyrum at langa leið mætti heyra hennar harmtölur. Nú er harmr mikill, ok heyrir um allan bæinn.

Guðrún spyr skemmumeyjar sínar hví þær sé svá ókátar eða hryggar—

'Eða hvat er yðr, eða hví fari þér sem vitlausir menn, eða hverr gyzki er yðr orðinn?'

Þá svarar hirðkona ein er Svafrlöð hét, 'Þetta er ótímadagr. Vár holl er full af harmi.'

Þá mælti Guðrún til sinnar vinkonu :

'Stattu upp, vér höfum lengi sofit. Vek Brynhildi, göngum til borða ok verum kátar.'

'Þat geri ek eigi,' sagði hon, 'at vekja hana né við hana mæla, ok mörg dægr drakk hon eigi mjöð né vín, ok hefir hon fengit goða reiði.'

Þá mælti Guðrún til Gunnars :

'Gakk at hitta hana,' segir hon, 'ok seg oss illa kunna hennar meini.'

Gunnarr svarar, 'Þat er mér bannat at hitta hana eða hennar fé at skipta.'

Þó ferr Gunnarr at hitta hana ok leitar marga vega málsenda við hana ok fær ekki af um svörin. Gengr nú á brott ok hittir Högna ok biðr hann finna hana. En hann kvezk vera ófúss ok ferr þó ok fekk ekki af henni. Ok er hittr Sigurðr ok beðinn at finna hana. Hann svarar engu, ok er svá búit um kveldit.

Ok annan dag eptir er hann kom heim^a af dýraveiði, hitti hann Guðrúnu ok mælti,

'Þann veg hefir fyrir mik borit sem þetta muni til mikils koma hrollr sjá, ok mun Brynhildr deyja.'

Guðrún svarar, 'Herra minn, mikil kynsl fylgja henni. Hon hefir nú sofit sjau dægr, svá at engi þorði at vekja hana.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Eigi sefr hon, hon hefir stórræði með höndum við okkr.'

Þá mælti Guðrún með gráti,

'Þat er mikill harmr at vita þinn bana. Far heldr ok finn hana, ok vit ef sjatni hennar ofsi. Gef henni gull, ok mýk svá hennar reiði.'

^a om. B

me happy in your hall, neither drinking, nor playing at chequers, nor speaking in friendly tone, nor working fine materials in gold, nor giving you advice.'

She said her deepest sorrow lay in not being married to Sigurd. She raised herself up and struck her tapestry work, tearing it apart, and then she ordered the door of the apartment to be opened so that her lament could be heard afar off. There was now great sorrow and it was heard over all the precincts.

Gudrun asked her attendants why they were so depressed and sad :

'What's the matter with you ? Why go about like people demented ? What has so strangely come over you ?'

Then one of her suite called Svafrlod answered :

'This is an evil day, our hall is full of sorrow.'

Then Gudrun spoke to her confidante :

'Get up, we have long been asleep. Rouse Brynhild, and let's set to weaving and be gay.'

'I'll not do it,' she said, 'neither rouse her, nor talk to her—for many a day she's drunk no mead or wine, and the wrath of the gods has come upon her.'

Then Gudrun spoke to Gunnar :

'Go and see her,' she said, 'and say we take no pleasure in her misery.'

'I'm forbidden to see her,' replied Gunnar, 'or to have any part in what is hers.'

But Gunnar went to see her, and tried in numerous ways to talk with her, but got nothing in reply. He then went away, met Hogni, and asked him to visit her. He said he was reluctant, but he went, and got nothing out of her. And he met Sigurd and asked him to visit her. He returned no answer, and such was the position that evening.

And the following day, when he returned from the hunt, he found Gudrun and said :

'I've had a presentiment that the feverish shivering will come to something, and Brynhild will die.'

'My lord,' replied Gudrun, 'there are great portents all about her. She has now slept for seven days, and no one has dared to wake her.'

'She's not asleep,' answered Sigurd. 'She's busy with some deep scheme against us both.'

Then, weeping, Gudrun said :

'How great is the sorrow to hear of your death ! It would be better to go and visit her, and see if her pride will abate. Give her gold and so mollify her anger.'

Sigurðr gekk út ok fann opinn salinn. Hann hugði hana sofa ok brá af henni klæðum ok mælti,

‘Vaki þú, Brynhildr, sól skínn um allan bæinn, ok er ærit sofit. Hritt af þér harmi ok tak gleði.’

Hon mælti, ‘Hví sætir þinni^a dirfð er þú ferr mik at hitta? Mér var engi verri í þessum svikum.’

Sigurðr spyrr, ‘Hví mælir þú eigi við menn, eða hvat angrar þik?’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Þér skal ek segja mína reiði.’

Sigurðr mælti, ‘Heilluð ertu, ef þú ætlar grimman minn hug við þik, ok er sjá þinn maðr er þú kaust.’

‘Nei,’ segir hon, ‘eigi reið Gunnarr eldinn til vár, ok eigi galt hann mér at mundi felldan val. Ek undruðumk þann mann er kom í minn sal, ok þóttumk ek kenna yður augu, ok fekk ek þó eigi víst skilit fyrir þeiri hulðu er á lá á minni hamingju.’¹

Sigurðr segir, ‘Ekki erum vér gofgari menn en synir Gjúka. Þeir drápu Danakonung ok mikinn hofðingja, bróður Buðla konungs.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Mart illt eigum vér þeim upp at inna, ok minn oss ekki á harma vára. Þú, Sigurðr, vát orminn, ok reitt eldinn, ok of mína sök, ok váru þar eigi synir Gjúka konungs.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Ekki varð ek þinn maðr ok vartu mín kona, ok galt við þér mund ágætr konungr.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Eigi sá^b ek svá Gunnar, at minn hugr gerði^c hlæja við honum, ok grimm em ek við hann, þótt ek hylma yfir fyrir qðrum.’

‘Þat er ógurligt,’ segir Sigurðr, ‘at unna eigi slíkum konungi, eða hvat angrar þik mest? Mér sýnisk sem hans ást sé þér gulli betri.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Þat er mér sárast minna harma at ek fæ eigi því til leiðar komit at bitrt sverð væri roðit í þínu blóði.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Kvíð eigi því. Skammt mun at bíða áðr bitrt sverð mun standa í mínu hjarta, ok ekki muntu þér verra biðja, því at þú munt eigi eptir mik lifa. Munu ok fáir várir lífsdagar heðan í frá.’

Brynhildr svarar, ‘Eigi standa þín orð af litlu fári, síðan þér svikuð mik frá qllu ynði, ok ekki hirði ek um lífit.’

Sigurðr svarar, ‘Lif þú ok unn Gunnari konungi ok mér, ok allt mitt fé vil ek til gefa at þú deyr eigi.’

^a B emends to þín.

^b B emends to sé.

^c thus Ol (cf. same phrase p. 64), om. V

¹ See Glossary s.v. *hamingja*

Sigurd went and found the hall open. He thought she was asleep and threw back the bed clothes from her and said :

‘Wake up, Brynhild. The sun is shining all round the house—you’ve done enough sleeping. Shake off your cares and be happy.’

‘How can you dare come to see me?’ she said. ‘No one behaved worse in deceiving me than you.’

‘Why don’t you speak to people?’ Sigurd asked. ‘What’s troubling you?’

‘I’ll tell you about my anger,’ Brynhild answered.

‘You’re bewitched if you imagine I bear you ill will, and your husband is the man you chose,’ said Sigurd.

‘No,’ she said. ‘Gunnar did not ride through the fire to me, nor did he make me a marriage-payment of slaughtered dead. I was puzzled by the man who came into my hall, and I thought I recognised your eyes, but I wasn’t able to see things clearly because of the veil which shrouded my good fortune.’¹

‘I’m not a nobler man than Gjuki’s sons,’ said Sigurd. ‘They killed the Danish king, and a great prince, King Budli’s brother.’

‘I’ve a heavy score to settle with them,’ answered Brynhild, ‘and don’t remind me of my sorrows. You, Sigurd, struck at the dragon, and rode through the fire, even for my sake, and King Gjuki’s sons weren’t there.’

‘I was never your husband, nor you my wife,’ replied Sigurd, ‘and a famous king put down the marriage payment for you.’

‘I’ve not looked at Gunnar so that my heart smiled upon him,’ answered Brynhild, ‘and I bear him ill will though I hide it from others.’

‘It’s monstrous not to love such a king,’ said Sigurd. ‘What is it that troubles you most? It seems to me that his love should mean more to you than gold.’

‘The most hurtful for me of my sorrows,’ answered Brynhild, ‘is that I can’t get a keen sword reddened in your blood.’

‘Have no fear on that score,’ replied Sigurd. ‘There’ll not be long to wait before a sharp sword is embedded in my heart, and you’ll not ask for anything less for yourself, because you’ll not survive me—there’ll not be many days left to us from now on.’

‘No slight malice prompts your words since you cheated me of all happiness,’ answered Brynhild, ‘and life is nothing to me.’

‘Live, love King Gunnar and me,’ replied Sigurd. ‘I’ll give all I have if only you’ll not die.’

Brynhildr svarar, 'Eigi veizt þú gerla mitt eðli. Þú berr af öllum mönnum, en þér hefir engi kona orðit leiðari en ek.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Annat er sannara. Ek unna þér betr en mér, þótt ek yrða fyrir þeim svikum, ok má því nú ekki bregða, því at ávallt er ek gáða míns geðs, þá harmaði mik þat er þú vart eigi mín kona. En af mér bar ek sem ek máttu, þat, er ek var í konungshöll, ok unða ek því þó at vér várum öll saman. Kann ok verða at fram verði at koma þat sem fyrir er spát, ok ekki skal því kvíða.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Of seinat hefir þú at segja at þik angrar minn harmr, en nú fáu vér enga líkn.'

Sigurðr svarar, 'Gjarna vilda ek at vit stigim á einn beð bæði ok værir þú mín kona.'

Brynhildr svarar, 'Ekki er slíkt at mæla, ok eigi mun ek eiga tvá konunga í einni höll, ok fyrr skal ek líf láta en ek svíkja Gunnar konung,'—

ok minnisk nú á þat er þau fundusk á fjallinu ok sórusk eiða,—

'En nú er því öllu brugðit, ok vil ek eigi lífa.'

'Eigi munða ek þitt nafn,' sagði Sigurðr, 'ok eigi kennda ek þik fyrr en þú vart gipt, ok er þetta inn mesti harmr.'

Þá mælti Brynhildr, 'Ek vann eið at eiga þann mann er riði minn vafþröga, en þann eið vilda ek halda eða deyja ella.'

'Heldr en þú deyir, vil ek þik eiga, en fyrirláta Guðrúnu,' segir Sigurðr, en svá þrútuðu hans síður at í sundr gengu brynjuhringar.

'Eigi vil ek þik,' sagði Brynhildr, 'ok engan annarra.'

Sigurðr gekk í brott.

Svá segir í Sigurðarkviðu :

(25) Út gekk Sigurðr
andspjalli frá,
hollvín lofða,
ok hnípaði,^a
svá at ganga nam
gunnarfúsum
sundr of síður
serkr járnofinn.

Ok er Sigurðr kom í höllina, spýrr Gunnarr hvárt hann viti hvern meintregi henni væri eða hvárt hon hefir mál sitt. Sigurðr kvað hana

^a thus *Ol, B* ; hnípaði *V* (*unlikely as pret. of hnípa, cf. B*).

‘You don’t really know my nature,’ answered Brynhild. ‘You are the most outstanding of all men, and no woman grew more hateful to you than I did.’

‘The truth is rather different,’ replied Sigurd. ‘I loved you more than myself—though I met with trickery, and now that can’t be changed—for when my wits were unclouded it always grieved me that you weren’t my wife. But I bore up as best I could, for I was in a royal hall. And yet I was glad that we were all together. It may be that what was formerly prophesied will come true, but I shan’t worry about it.’

‘You’re too late in saying that my grief distresses you,’ answered Brynhild, ‘and now I shall find no relief.’

‘I would like us to sleep together,’ replied Sigurd, ‘and you would be my wife.’

‘Such things must not be said,’ answered Brynhild. ‘Nor will I have two lords in one hall. I’d die sooner than deceive King Gunnar’—and then she recalled how they met on the mountain and made their vows—

‘But now all has changed, and I don’t want to live.’

‘I had no memory of your name,’ said Sigurd, ‘nor recognised you before you were married—and that is my greatest sorrow.’

‘I swore an oath,’ said Brynhild then, ‘to marry the man who rode through my leaping flames, and that oath I would keep, or die.’

‘Rather than you should die, I’ll marry you and leave Gudrun,’ said Sigurd, and his breast so heaved that the links of his hauberck snapped.

‘I don’t want you,’ said Brynhild, ‘nor any other man.’

Sigurd went away.

As the lay of Sigurd says :

(25) Out went Sigurd
 away from that talk,
 staunch friend of men,
 so strong his grief,
 the shirt, iron woven,
 at the warrior’s sides
 it sprang then wide
 and split apart.

And when Sigurd came into the hall, Gunnar asked if he knew what was grieving her, and if she were capable of speech. Sigurd said

mæla mega. Ok nú ferr Gunnarr at hitta hana í annat sinn ok spyr hví gegndi hennar meini ^a eða hvárt nokkur bót mundi til liggja.

‘Ek vil eigi lifa,’ sagði Brynhildr, ‘því at Sigurðr hefir mik vélt ok eigi síðr þik, þá er þú lézt hann fara í mína sæng. Nú vil ek eigi tvá menn eiga senn í einni holl, ok þetta skal vera bani Sigurðar eða þinn eða minn, því at hann hefir þat allt sagt Guðrúnu, en hon brigzlar mér.’

32

Eptir ^b þetta gekk Brynhildr út ok settisk ^c undir skemmuvegg sinn ok hafði margar harmtölur, kvað sér allt leitt, bæði land ok ^d ríki, er hon átti eigi ^e Sigurð. Ok enn kom Gunnarr til hennar. Þá mælti Brynhildr,

‘Þú skalt ^f láta bæði ríkit ok féit, lífit ok mik, ok skal ek fara heim til frænda minna ok sitja þar hrygg, nema þú drepir Sigurð ok son hans. Al eigi upp úlfhvelpinn.’

Gunnarr varð nú mjök hugsjúkr ok þóttisk eigi vita hvat helzt lá til, alls hann var í eiðum við Sigurð, ok lék ýmist í hug, þótti þat þó mest svívirðing ef konan gengi frá honum.

Gunnarr mælti, ‘Brynhildr er mér öllu betri, ok frægst er hon allra kvenna, ok fyrr skal ek lif láta en týna hennar ást.’ Ok kallar til sín Högna, bróður sinn, ok mælti,

‘Fyrir mik er komit vandmæli mikit,’—segir at hann vill drepa Sigurð, kvað hann hafa vélt sik í tryggð,—

‘Ráðum vit þá gullinu ok öllu ríkinu.’

Hogni segir, ‘Ekki samir okkr særin ^g at rjúfa með ófriði. Er oss ok mikit traust at honum. Eru engir konungar oss jafnir ef sjá inn hýnski konungr lifir, ok slíkan mág fám vér aldri, ok hygg at hversu gott væri ef vér ættim slíkan mág ok systursonu, ok sé ek hversu þetta stenzk af. Þat hefir Brynhildr vakit, ok hennar ráð koma oss í mikla svívirðing ok skaða.’

Gunnarr svarar, ‘Þetta skal fram fara, ok sé ek ráðit. Eggjum til Guttorm, bróður okkarn. Hann er ungr ok fás vitandi ok fyrir útan alla eiða.’

Hogni segir, ‘Þat ráð lízk mér illa sett, ok þótt fram komi, þá munu vér gjöld fyrir taka at svíkja slíkan mann.’

Gunnarr segir Sigurð deyja skulu,—

^a B emends to mein.

^b The preceding ch. heading illeg. Ol. reads Svikinn Sigurðr.

^c B sez

^d land ok, illeg. V

^e thus Ol, om. V

^f skalt illeg. V

^g thus Ol, sarin V

she could speak. And now Gunnar went to see her a second time, asked what her grief meant and whether there was any remedy for it.

‘I don’t want to live,’ said Brynhild, ‘for Sigurd betrayed me, and he betrayed you no less when you let him sleep with me. Now I’ll not have two husbands at one and the same time in one hall, and this will mean Sigurd’s death—or yours or mine, for he’s told Gudrun everything, and she taunts me with it.’

32

After this, Brynhild went out and sat beneath the wall of her private quarters, and gave vent to her grief. She said that everything was hateful to her, land and power, too, since Sigurd was not hers. And Gunnar came to her once more. Then Brynhild said :

‘You’ll lose both power and wealth, your life and me, and I shall go back to my family and live there sorrowfully, if you don’t kill Sigurd and his son. Don’t rear the wolf cub.’

Gunnar now grew very distressed. He did not know, he thought, what had best be done, for he was bound to Sigurd by oath, and his mind toyed now with this, now with that, but he thought it would be a terrible disgrace if his wife left him.

‘I treasure Brynhild above all else,’ said Gunnar. ‘She is the most famous of all women, and I would sooner die than lose her love.’ And he summoned his brother, Hogni.

‘I am faced with a difficult problem,’ he told him, and said he meant to kill Sigurd, who, he declared, had broken faith with him—

‘Then the gold and all the power will be ours.’

‘It would not be right,’ said Hogni, ‘to break our oaths by a hostile act. And he’s a great asset to us. No kings are a match for us if this Hunnish king is alive, and never again shall we get a brother-in-law like him, and think how fine it would if we had a brother-in-law like him and nephews, too! But I see where all this started. Brynhild is behind it, and her plans will do us harm and bring us deep shame.’

‘It will have to be carried out,’ said Gunnar, ‘and I see a way. Let’s urge on our brother Guttorm to do it. He is young and simple and free from any oath.’

‘I think the plan ill advised,’ said Hogni, ‘and even if successful we shall still pay dearly for betraying such a man.’

Gunnar said that Sigurd must die—

‘Eða mun ek deyja ella.’

Hann biðr Brynhildi upp standa ok vera káta. Hon stóð upp ok segir þó, at Gunnarr mun eigi koma fyrr í sama rekkju henni en þetta er fram komit.

Nú ræðask þeir við bræðr. Gunnarr segir at þetta er gild banasök at hafa tekit meydóm Brynhildar,—

‘Ok eggjum Guttorm at gera þetta verk.’

Ok kalla hann til sín ok bjóða honum gull ok mikit ríki at ^a vinna þetta til. Þeir tóku orm einn ok af vargsholdi ok létu sjóða ok gáfu honum at eta, sem skáldit kvað :

(26) Sumir viðfiska ¹ tóku,
sumir vitnishræ skífðu,
sumir Guttormi gáfu
gera hold
við mungáti
ok marga hluti
aðra í tyfrum.

Ok við þessa fœzlu varð hann svá œfr ok ágjarn ok allt saman ok fortölur Grímhildar at hann hét at gera þetta verk. Þeir hétu honum ok mikilli sœmð í móti. Sigurðr vissi eigi ván þessa vélræða. Mátti hann ok eigi við sköpum vinna né sínu aldralagi. Sigurðr vissi sik ok eigi véla verðan frá þeim.

Guttormr gekk inn at Sigurði eptir um morgininn er hann hvíldi í rekkju sinni. Ok er hann leit við honum, þorði Guttormr eigi at veita honum tilræði ok hvarf út apr, ok svá ferr í annat sinn. Augu Sigurðar váru svá snqr at fár einn þorði gegn at sjá. Ok it þriðja sinn gekk hann inn, ok var Sigurðr þá sofnaðr. Guttormr brá sverði ok leggr á Sigurði svá at blóðrefillinn stóð í dýnum undir honum. Sigurðr vaknar við sárit, en Guttormr gekk út til dyranna. Þá tók Sigurðr sverðit Gram ok kastar eptir honum, ok kom á bakit ok tók í sundr í miðju. Fell annan veg fótahlutr, en annan hqfudit ok hendirnar apr í skemmuna. Guðrún var sofnuð í faðmi Sigurðar, en vaknaði við óumræðiligan harm er hon flaut í hans blóði, ok svá veinaði ^b hon með grát ok harmtölur at Sigurðr reis upp við hœgendit ok mælti :

‘Grát eigi,’ sagði hann. ‘Þínir bræðr lifa þér til gamans, en þess til ungan son á ek, er kann eigi at varask fjáendr sína, ok illa hafa þeir fyrir sínum hlut sét. Ekki fá þeir slíkan ^c mág at ríða í her með sér né

^a thus B, ok Ol, V. B's emendation adopted as making better sense.

^b kveinaði B

^c thus Ol, B (cf. Sig. in skam. 27); sér líkara V

‘ Or else I shall die.’

He told Brynhild to get up and be gay. She got up but said that Gunnar would not share her bed until it was done.

The brothers now talked it over. Gunnar said that to have robbed Brynhild of her virginity fully deserved death—

‘ Let’s urge on Guttorm to do the deed.’

And they called him over and offered him gold and great power if he would do it. They took a serpent and some wolf’s flesh, boiled them up and gave him to eat of them, as the skald says :

(26) Some took forest fish,¹
 some wolfish flesh sliced,
 some carved for Guttorm
 carrion of wolf,
 gave it with ale
 and with other things besides
 in magic spells.

And what with the food and Grimhild’s arguments he grew so fiery and impetuous that he promised to do the deed. And they in return promised him high honours. Sigurd was not expecting such treachery, but he could not fight against fate and his destiny. Nor was Sigurd aware that he deserved any double dealing at their hands.

The following morning, Guttorm went in to Sigurd when he was resting in bed. But when Sigurd looked at him, Guttorm dared not attack him, and went out again. This happened a second time. Sigurd’s eyes were so piercing that few dared meet them. He went in a third time, and Sigurd was now asleep. Guttorm drew his sword and lunged at Sigurd so that the point pierced the bed beneath him. Sigurd awoke with the wound just as Guttorm was going out through the door. Then Sigurd picked up the sword Gram and hurled it after him. It caught him across the back and severed him at the waist. The lower half fell one way, and the other, the head and arms, fell back into the room. Gudrun had been asleep in Sigurd’s arms, and she awoke in unutterable grief, bathed in his blood, and she so groaned and wept and sorrowed that Sigurd raised himself on the pillow and spoke :

‘ Do not weep,’ he said. ‘ Your brothers live to cheer you, but I have a son who is too young to be on guard against his enemies—and they’ve done badly for themselves ! They’ll not find a brother-in-law like me to ride in the army with them, nor such a nephew, should he

¹ A kenning for serpents

systurson, ef sjá næði at vaxa. Ok nú er þat fram komit er fyrir löngu var spát ok vér höfum dulizk við, en engi má við skopum vinna. En þessu veldr Brynhildir er mér ann um hvern mann fram, ok þess má ek sverja, at Gunnari gerða ek aldri mein, ok þyrmda ek okkrum eiðum, ok eigi var ek of mikill vinr hans konu. Ok ef ek hefða vitat þetta fyrir ok stiga ek á mína fœtr með mín vápn, þá skyldu margir týna sínu lífi áðr en ek fella, ok allir þeir brœðr drepnir, ok torveldra mundi þeim at drepa mik en inn mesta vísund eða villigölt.’

Konungrinn lét nú líf sitt. En Guðrún blæs mœðiliga ondunni. Þat heyrir Brynhildir ok hló er hon heyrði hennar andvarp. Þá mælti Gunnarr,

‘Eigi hlær þú af því at þér sé glatt um hjartaœtr, eða hví hafnar þú þínum lit? Ok mikit forað ertu, ok meiri ván at þú sér feig, ok engi væri makligri til at sjá Atla konung drepinn fyrir augum þér, ok ættir þú þar yfir at standa. Nú verðum vér at sitja yfir mági várum ok bróðurbana.’

Hon svarar, ‘Engi frýr at eigi sé fullvegít, en Atli konungr hirðir ekki um hót yður eða reiði, ok hann mun yðr lengr lifa ok hafa meira vald.’

Högni mælti, ‘Nú er fram komit þat er Brynhildir spáði, ok þetta it illa verk er ^a vér fám aldri bót.’

Guðrún mælti, ‘Frændr mínir hafa drepit minn mann. Nú munu þér riða í her fyrst, ok er þér komið til bardaga, þá munu þér finna at Sigurðr er eigi á aðra hönd yðr, ok munu þér þá sjá at Sigurðr var yður ^b gæfa ok styrkr, ok ef hann ætti sér slíka sonu, þá mætti þér styrkjask við hans afkvæmi ok sína frændr.’

Nú þóttisk engi kunna at svara at Brynhildir beiddi þess hlæjandi er hon harmaði með gráti. Þá mælti hon,

‘Þat dreymði mik, Gunnarr, at ek átta ^c kalda sæng, en þú riðr ^a í hendr óvinum þínum, ok öll ætt yður mun illa fara er þér eruð eiðrofa, ok munðir þú þat óglöggit er þit blönduðuð blóði saman, Sigurðr ok þú, er þú rétt hann, ok hefir þú honum allt illu launat þat er hann gerði vel til þín ok lét þik fremstan vera, ok þá reyndi þat, er hann kom til vár, hvé hann helt sína eiða, at hann lagði okkar í milli it snarpeggjaða sverð þat er eitri var hert. Ok snemma réðu þér til saka við hann ok við mik, þá er ek var heima með feðr mínum, ok hafða ek allt þat er ek vilda, ok ætlaða ek engan yðarn minn skyldu verða, þá er þér riðuð þar at garði þrír konungar. Síðan leiddi Atli mik á tal ok spyrr ef ek

^a thus Ol, om V. B reverses vér fám.

^b B emends to ætta (cf. Brot. 16 l. 4).

^c B emends to riðir (cf. Brot. 16 l. 5).

^b thus Ol, þeira V

manage to reach manhood. And what was long since prophesied has now come to pass. I could never bring myself to believe it, but no one can fight against fate. But Brynhild is responsible, she who loves me above all men. But I can swear that I never wronged Gunnar and I kept the oaths sworn between us, nor was I too close a friend of his wife's. And had I known of this before, and got on my feet with my weapons, many would lose their lives before I fell, and the brothers would all be slain, and they would find me harder to kill than the greatest bison or wild boar.'

Then the king died. And Gudrun gave a deep moan. Brynhild heard it and laughed when she heard Gudrun sobbing. Then Gunnar said :

'You're not laughing because you feel happy deep down in your heart—else why does your colour leave you? You're a monster and very likely a doomed woman. None more deserving than you to see King Atli killed before your eyes—and you'd have to be present! But I must watch by my brother-in-law and by my brother's slayer.'

'No one will complain that there's not been enough killing,' she replied. 'But King Atli cares nothing for your threats or anger, and he'll outlive you, and wield greater power.'

'What Brynhild prophesied has now come to pass,' said Hogni, 'and this evil deed which we can never make undone.'

'My kinsmen have killed my husband,' said Gudrun. 'Now you will ride first in the army, and when you do battle you'll find that Sigurd's not at your side, and then you'll see that Sigurd was your luck and your strength, and if he'd had sons like himself, you'd have been strengthened by his offspring and their kin.'

No one then thought he could explain why Brynhild had laughing asked for what she was weeping over. She then spoke :

'Gunnar, I dreamed that my bed was cold, and you are riding into the hands of your enemies, and things will go badly with all your family for you broke your trust, nor did you remember very clearly when you betrayed him, how you and Sigurd mingled your blood together, and you've repaid him solely with evil for all that he did for you, and for giving you a pre-eminent position. And when he came to me he proved how he kept his oaths by laying between us that keen-edged, venom-tempered sword. But you early did wrong to him and to me when I was at home with my father and had everything I wanted, not meaning that any one of you should be mine, when you three kings rode up to the stronghold. Then Atli took me aside and

vilda þann eiga er riði Grana. Sá var yðr ekki líkr, ok þá hétumk ek syni Sigmundar konungs ok engum qðrum, ok eigi mun yðr farask, þótt ek deyja.'

Þá reis Gunnarr upp ok lagði hendr um háls henni, ok bað at hon skyldi lifa ok þiggja fé, ok allir aðrir lottu hana at deyja. En hon hratt hverjum frá sér er at henni kom, ok kvað ekki tjóa mundu at letja hana þess er hon ætlaði. Síðan hét Gunnarr á Högna, ok spyr hann ráða, ok bað hann til fara ok vita ef hann fengi mýkt skaplyndi hennar, ok kvað nú ærna þorþ vera á hqndum ef sefask mætti hennar harmr, þar til er frá liði.

Högna svarar, 'Leti engi maðr hana at deyja, því at hon varð oss aldri at gagni ok engum manni síðan hon kom higat.'

Nú bað hon taka mikit gull, ok bað þar koma alla þá er fé vildu þiggja. Síðan tók hon eitt sverð ok lagði undir hqnd sér ok hncig upp við dýnur ok mælti,

'Taki hér nú gull ¹ hvern er þiggja vill.'

Allir þogðu.

Brynhildr mælti, 'Þiggið gullit ok njótið vel.'

Enn mælti Brynhildr til Gunnars,

'Nú mun ek segja þér litla stund þat er eptir mun ganga : sættask munu þit Guðrún brátt með ráðum Grímhildar innar fjölkunngu. Dóttir Guðrúnar ok Sigurðar mun heita Svanhildr,² er vænst mun fœdd allra kvenna. Mun ^a Guðrún gefin Atla at sínum óvilja. Oddrúnu ³ muntu vilja eiga, enn Atli mun þat banna. Þá munu þit eiga launfundi, ok mun hon þér unna. Atli mun þik svíkja ok í ormgarð setja, ok síðan mun Atli dreppinn ok synir hans. Guðrún mun þá drepa. Síðan munu hana stórar bárur bera til borgar Jónakrs konungs. Þar mun hon fœða ágæta sonu. Svanhildr mun ór landi send ok gipt Jormunreki ⁴ konungi. Hana munu bíta Bikka ⁵ ráð. Ok þá er farin qll ætt yður, ok eru Guðrúnar harmar at meiri.'

33

'Nú ^b bið ek þik, Gunnarr, efstu bænar. Lát gera eitt bál mikit á

^a thus *Ol*, verðr *B*; *om. V*

^b *The preceding ch. heading reads Bœn Brynhildar.*

¹ In *PE* the corresponding passage (*Sig. in skam.*, st. 49) undoubtedly implies an invitation to her free-born attendants to die with her, hence 'all were silent'. This idea is not brought out in the saga.

² See Introduction p. xxxi

³ Atli's sister and a late-comer to the Volsung cycle.

⁴ The historical Ermanaric. He was ruler of the Ostrogothic kingdom when it fell before the onslaught of the Huns in 375. In the legends that grew up

asked if I would marry the man riding Grani. He was not like you. Then I was betrothed to King Sigmund's son and none other. Things won't go smoothly for you, even though I die.'

Then Gunnar stood up and embraced her and begged her to live and to accept riches, and all the others urged her not to die. But she rebuffed all who came to her and said it was useless to try to turn her from her purpose. Then Gunnar appealed to Hogni and asked him for advice and told him to go and see if he might soothe her, and said it was now very necessary if her grief could be lessened until time healed it!

'Let no one tell her not to die,' answered Hogni, 'for she's been no use to us, or to anyone else, since she came here.'

She now ordered a large amount of gold to be brought and ordered all those who desired riches to approach. Then she took a sword and stabbed herself beneath the arm and sank back against the cushions and said:

'If any of you want gold,¹ here—take it now.'

All were silent.

'Accept the gold,' said Brynhild, 'and enjoy it.'

Brynhild spoke to Gunnar once more:

'Now I shall tell you in brief what is going to happen: On the advice of that sorceress Grimhild, you and Gudrun will soon be reconciled. The daughter of Gudrun and Sigurd will be named Svanhild²—and she will be far fairer than any woman born. Gudrun will be married to Atli against her will. You will want to marry Oddrun,³ but Atli will forbid it. Then you will have secret meetings together, and she will love you. Atli will betray you and put you in a snake pit, and then Atli and his sons will be slain. Gudrun will kill them. Then mighty waves will carry her to King Jonakr's castle. There she will bear noble sons. Svanhild will be sent out of the country and married to King Jormunrek.⁴ Bikki's⁵ plotting will be her downfall. And then all your line will have passed away and Gudrun's sorrows will be the greater.'

33

'I now ask you, Gunnar, to grant a last request. Have a great pyre

around the historical Theoderic the Great (see Introduction p. x) which reverse the facts and show Theoderic as driven from his throne by Odoaker, Ermanaric eventually took over the latter's role as Theoderic's main opponent.

² He is the Sifka of *ÞSS*, the Sibiche of the MHG Dietrich (Theoderic) poems; in Saxo Grammaticus he is known as Bicco, and in OE as Becca. He regularly appears as the legendary Ermanaric's evil counsellor.

sléttum velli ǫllum oss, mér ok Sigurði ok þeim sem drepnir váru með honum. Lát þar tjalda yfir af rauðu mannablóði ok brenna mér þar á aðra hönd þenna inn hýnska konung, en á aðra hönd honum mína menn, tvá at höfði, tvá at fótum, ok tvá hauka. Þá er at jafnaði skipt. Látið þar á milli okkar brugðit sverð sem fyrr, er vit stigum á einu beð, ok hétum þá hjóna nafni.^a Ok eigi fellr honum þá hurð á hæla ef ek fylgi honum, ok er vár leizla þá ekki aumlig ef honum fylgja fimm ambáttir ok átta þjónar er faðir minn gaf mér, ok þar brenna ok þeir er drepnir váru með Sigurði. Ok fleira munda ek mæla ef ek væra eigi sár, en nú þýtr undin,^b en sárit opnask,^c ok sagða ek þó satt.⁷

Nú er búit um lík Sigurðar at fornum sið,¹ ok gert mikit bál. Ok er þat er mjök í kynt, þá var lagt á ofan lík Sigurðar Fáfnisbana ok sonar hans þrévetrs, er Brynhildr lét drepa, ok Guttorms. Ok er bálit var allt loganda, gekk Brynhildr þar á út ok mælti við skemmumeyjar sínar at þær tæki gull þat er hon vildi gefa þeim. Ok eptir þetta deyr Brynhildr ok brann þar með Sigurði, ok lauk svá þeira ævi.

34

Nú ^a segir þat hvern er þessi tíðendi heyrir, at engi maðr mun þvílíkr eptir í veröldunni, ok aldri mun síðan borinn slíkr maðr sem Sigurðr var fyrir hversvetna sakar, ok hans nafn mun aldri fyrnask í þýðverskri tungu ok á Norðrlöndum meðan heimrinn stendr.

Þat er sagt einnhvern dag, þá er Guðrún sat í skemmu sinni, þá mælti hon,

‘Betra var þá vart líf er ek átta Sigurð. Svá bar hann af ǫllum mǫnnum sem gull af járnri eða laukr af ǫðrum grǫsum eða hjortr af ǫðrum dýrum, unz bræðr mínir fyrirmundu mér slíks manns er ǫllum var fremri. Eigi máttu þeir sofa áðr þeir drápu hann. Mikinn gný gerði Grani, þá er hann sá sáran sinn lánardröttin. Síðan rædda ek við hann sem við mann, en hann hnípti í jorðina ok vissi at Sigurðr var fallinn.’

^a thus Ol, B (cf. Sig. in skam. 68 l. 8), om. V

^b u- is barely legible and, as Ol remarks, could be corrected from o or d. Ol and B both read þýtr undin which, B thinks (though Ol doubts) corresponds to Sig. in skam. 71 l. 6 undir svella. Ol suggests the words might be a distortion of þverr ómon, cf. Sig. in skam. 71 l. 5 ómon þverr.

^c thus Ol, optast V

^d The preceding ch. heading reads Brotthvarf Guðrúnar.

¹ i.e. as it seemed to the later Christian saga teller. In fact, pagan Scandinavia knew not only cremation but also inhumation which latter was thus not a specifically Christian innovation. According to Snorri's prologue to

built on the level ground for all of us, for myself, for Sigurd and for those killed with him. Let there be a covering dyed in men's red blood, and burn there at my one side the Hunnish king, and at his other side my men, two at his head, two at his feet, and two hawks—an equal division. Lay there between us a drawn sword as of old when we shared the same bed—when we were called man and wife, and if I accompany him the door will not swing shut on his heels, nor will our funeral be paltry if five bondswomen and eight servants given me by my father accompany him, and also burn there those who were killed with Sigurd, and I would say more if I were not wounded, but now the wound is frothing, the gash opening, and I have told the truth.'

So Sigurd's body was laid out according to the ancient custom,¹ and a great pyre was built. And when it was properly alight the body of Sigurd Fafnisbane was laid upon it, also the body of his three year old son whom Brynhild had ordered to be slain, and Guttorm's. And when the pyre was blazing, Brynhild went out on to it and told her maids in waiting to take the gold she desired to give them. And after that Brynhild died and was burnt there with Sigurd, and so their days ended.

34

Now everyone who heard of these events said that there was surely not a man like him left in the world, and that never again would there be born a man such as Sigurd was in every respect, and his name would never be forgotten wherever German was spoken, nor yet in the Northern lands, as long as the world endured.

The story goes that one day Gudrun was sitting in her room and said :

' I had a better life when I was married to Sigurd. He outclassed all men, just as gold does iron or garlic other herbs, or the stag other animals, until my brothers grudged me a husband such as he, superior as he was to all. They could not sleep until they had killed him. Grani made a terrible noise when he saw his lord wounded. Then I spoke to him as I would to a man, but he hung down his head to the ground, and knew that Sigurd had fallen.'

Heimskringla cremation was practised longer in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark, and archaeological evidence seems to support him (see Ellis, p. 11). It was not usual in Iceland (see G. Turville-Petre, *Heroic Age*, 100).

Síðan hvarf Guðrún á^a brott á skóga, ok heyrði alla vega frá sér varga þyt, ok þótti þá blíðara at deyja. Guðrún^b fór unz hon^c kom til hallar Hálf¹ konungs ok sat þar með Þóru Hákonardóttur^d í Danmørku sjau misseri ok var þar í miklum fagnaði, ok hon^e sló borða fyrir^f henni ok skrifaði þar á mörq ok stór verk ok fagra leika er tíðir váru í þann tíma, sverð ok brynjur ok allan konungs búnað, skip Sigmundar konungs er skrifuðu fyrir land fram. Ok þat byrðu þær er þeir þorðusk Sigarr ok Siggeirr á Fjóni^g suðr. Slíkt var þeira gaman, ok huggaðisk Guðrún nú nokkut harms síns.

Þetta spyr Grímhildr hvar Guðrún er niðr komin, heimtir á tal son sína ok spyr hverju þeir vilja bæta Guðrúnu son sinn ok mann; kvað þeim þat skylt. Gunnarr segir, kvezk vilja gefa henni gull ok bæta henni svá harma sína. Senda eptir vinum sínum ok búa hesta sína, hjálma, skjöldu, sverð ok brynjur ok alls konar herklæði. Ok var þessi ferð búin it kurteisligasta, ok engi sá kappi, er mikill var, sat nú heima. Hestar þeira váru brynjaðir, ok hverr riddari hafði annathvært gylltan hjálm eða skyggðan. Grímhildr ræzk í ferð með þeim, ok segir þeira ørendi svá fremi fullgert munu verða at hon siti eigi heima. Þeir höfðu alls fimm hundruð manna. Þeir höfðu ok ágæta menn með sér. Þar var Valdamarr³ af Danmørk ok Eymóðr ok Jarisleifr.⁴ Þeir gengu inn í holl Hálf¹ konungs. Þar váru Langbarðar, Frakkar ok Saxar. Þeir fóru með öllum herbúnaði ok höfðu yfir sér loða rauða, sem kveðit er :

(27) Stuttar brynjur,
steypa hjálma,
skálmum gyrðir,
ok höfðu skarar jarpar.

Þeir vildu velja systur sinni góðar gjafir ok mæltu vel við hana, en hon trúði engum þeira. Síðan færði Grímhildr^h henni meinsamligan drykk, ok varð hon við at taka ok munði síðan engar sakar.

Sá drykkur var blandinn með jarðar magni ok sæ ok dreyra sonar

^a om. B

^b thus Ol, Grani V; same mistake for Guðrún after hvarf, but corrected in margin.

^c thus Ol, hann V

^d thus Ol, þóra Hákonardóttir V

^e thus Ol following B's conjecture; om. V

^f yfir V

^g Fívi CR. Neckel and others emend to VS reading.

^h thus Ol (cf. Gðr. II, 21 l. 1), Gunnar V

¹ See p. 21 n. 2

² Fyn, the Danish island

Then Gudrun vanished into the woods and heard all around her the howling of wolves and thought it would be pleasanter to die. Gudrun went on until she came to King Half's¹ hall, and there in Denmark she dwelt with Hakon's daughter, Thora, for three and a half years, and was shown great hospitality, and she wove a tapestry for her, showing on it many great deeds and noble sports such as were customary at that time, swords and coats of mail, and all the equipment of a king, and King Sigmund's ships as they sailed along the coast. And they worked in Sigar and Sigeir fighting south in Fjon.² This was their pastime, and Gudrun was now to some extent comforted in her grief.

Grimhild heard what had become of Gudrun. She summoned her sons to talk with her, and asked how they meant to compensate Gudrun for her son and husband, saying that they were in duty bound to do so. Gunnar said he would give her gold and in that way compensate her for her sorrows. They sent for their friends and made ready their horses, helmets, shields, swords and coats of mail, and armour of every description. The expedition was magnificently fitted out and no champion of any standing stayed behind. Their horses were clad in mail, and each knight had either a gilt or else a brightly polished helmet. Grimhild accompanied them on the expedition and said that their mission would be successful as long as she did not stay behind. They had five hundred men in all. They also had famous men with them. Valdamar³ of Denmark was there, and Eymod and Jarisleif.⁴ They entered King Half's hall. There were Langobards, Franks and Saxons there. They journeyed with full equipment and they wore red fur cloaks, as the lay says :

(27) Short coats of mail,
girt with short swords,
high soaring helmets
and sorrel haired.

They wanted to choose out fine gifts for their sister and spoke kindly to her, but she would trust none of them. Then Grimhild brought her a doctored drink, and she had to take it and afterwards she had no memory of any of her wrongs.

That drink was mixed with the power of the earth, with the sea and

³ Valdamar is the name of more than one historical Danish king but here something is amiss since Hálf is presented as King of Denmark. Valdamar is probably a substitution for the meaningless *Valdarr Dønnum* of *Gðr.* II, st. 19, l. 1.

⁴ Probably the Russian Jaroslav the Great (1015-54) who was helped against his brother by a certain Eymund, probably the Eymod mentioned here.

hennar,¹ ok í því horni váru ristnir hvers kyns stafir ok roðnir með blóði, sem hér segir :

(28) Váru í því horni
hvers kyns stafir
ristnir ok roðnir,
ráða ek né máttak :
lyngfiskr ^a langr ^b ²
lands Haddingja,
ax óskorit,
innleið dýra.

(29) Váru þeim bjóri
böl mǫrg saman :
urt alls viðar
ok akarn brunninn,
umdogg arins,³
iðrar blótnar,^c
svíns lifr soðin,
því at sakar deyfði.

Ok eptir þat er vili þeira kom saman, gerðisk fagnaðr mikill. Þá mælti Grímhildr, er hon fann Guðrúnu,

‘Vel verði þér, dóttir. Ek gef þér gull ok alls konar gripi at þiggja eptir þinn feðr, dýrliga hringa ok ársal hýnskra meyja, þeira er kurteisastar eru : þá er þér bætr þinn maðr. Síðan skal þik gipta Atla konungi inum ríka. Þá muntu ráða hans auði. Ok lát eigi frændr þína fyrir sakir eins manns, ok ger heldr sem vér biðjum.’

Guðrún svarar, ‘Aldri vill ek eiga Atla konung, ok ekki samir okkr ætt saman at auka.’

Grímhildr svarar, ‘Eigi skaltu nú á heiptir hyggja, ok lát sem lifi Sigurðr ok Sigmundr ef þú átt sonu.’

Guðrún segir, ‘Ekki má ek af ^d honum hyggja. Hann var ǫllum fremri.’

Grímhildr segir, ‘Þenna konung mun þér skipat at eiga, en engan skaltu elligar eiga.’

^a thus *Ol*, *CR*; fisk *V*

^b thus *Ol*, *CR*; lagar *V*

^c thus *Ol*, *CR*; itrar blotna *V*

^d thus *Ol*, *om. V*

¹ The saga writer seems to have misunderstood his source. In *Grð.* II, st. 21, l. 8) the correct reading is very probably *sónardreyri*, ‘blood of atonement’ or *sonardreyri*, ‘swine’s blood’, which the saga writer read as *sonar dreyri*, ‘son’s blood’.

her son's blood.¹ In the horn characters of all kinds were engraved and reddened with blood, as this verse says :

(28) There appeared in the horn
all manner of letters,
graved and reddened,
read them I could not :
the long ling-fish²
of the land of the Haddings,
ear of corn uncut,
animals' jaws.

(29) Many were the ills
mixed with that ale :
herbs of all the wood,
and acorns scorched,
the dew of the hearth,³
hallowed entrails,
pig's liver boiled
for blunting wrongs.

And after this, when they were agreed, there was great rejoicing. Then when she found Gudrun, Grimhild said :

'Greetings, my daughter. I will give you gold and treasures of all kinds, an inheritance from your father, precious rings and the bed hangings of the most graceful Hun maidens, and then your husband will be atoned for. Afterwards I shall give you in marriage to that powerful king, Atli. Then you'll have control of his wealth. And don't forsake your relatives for the sake of one man. Do rather as we ask.'

'I will never marry King Atli,' replied Gudrun. 'It would not be seemly for us to continue the line together.'

'You must not now think of your feud,' answered Grimhild. 'Act as if Sigurd and Sigmund were alive, if you have sons.'

'I cannot forget him,' said Gudrun. 'He was superior to all.'

'You are destined to marry this king,' said Grimhild, 'and you shall marry none other.'

² A 'ling (or 'heather') fish' is a kenning for serpent, the 'land of the Haddings' (who were vikings) a kenning for 'sea'. Thus the expression as a whole would signify 'fish' or 'eel'. On the other hand it is possible to take 'ear of corn uncut' with the 'land of the Haddings', thus possibly connoting 'seaweed' (see Detter-Heinzel note to *Grð.* II st. 23, ll. 5-7).

³ Possibly a kenning for 'soot'

Guðrún segir, ' Bjóði þér mér eigi þenna konung, er illt eitt mun af standa þessi ætt, ok mun hann sonu þína ^a illu beita, ok þar eptir mun honum grimmu hefnt vera.'

Grímhildi ^b varð við hennar fortöglur illa við um sonu sína ^c ok mælti,

' Ger sem vér beiðum, ok muntu þar fyrir taka mikinn metnað ok vára vináttu ok þessa staði, er svá heita : Vínbjörg ok Valbjörg.'

Hennar orð stóðusk svá mikít at þetta varð fram at ganga.

Guðrún mælti, ' Þetta mun verða fram at ganga ok þó at mínum óvilja, ok mun þat lítt til ynðis, heldr til harma.'

Síðan stíga þeir á hesta sína, ok eru konur þeira settar í vagna, ok fóru svá sjau ^d daga á hestum, en aðra sjau ^d á skipum ok ina þriðju sjau ^d enn landveg, þar til er þeir kómu at einni hári holl. Henni gekk þar í mót mikít fjölmenni, ok var þar búin ágætlig veizla, sem áðr höfðu orð í milli farit, ok fór hon fram með sæmð ok mikilli þryði. Ok at þessi veizlu drekkir Atli brúðlaup til Guðrúnar. En aldri gerði hugr hennar við honum hlæja, ok með lítilli blíðu var þeira samvista.

35

Nú ^e er þat sagt einhverja nótt at Atli konungr vaknar ór svefni. Mælti hann við Guðrúnu :

' Þat dreymði mik,' segir hann, ' at þú legðir á mér sverði.'

Guðrún réð drauminn ok kvað þat fyrir eldi er járn dreymði,—

' Ok dul þeiri er þú ætlar þik öllum fremra.'

Atli mælti, ' Enn dreymði mik sem hér væri vaxnir tveir reyrteinar, ok vilda ek aldri skeðja. Síðan váru þeir rifnir upp með rótum ok roðnir í blóði ok bornir á bekki ok boðnir mér at eta. Enn dreymði mik at haukar tveir flygi mér af hendi ok væri bráðalausir ok fóru til heljar.¹ Þótti^f mér þeira hjörtum við hunang blandit, ok þóttumk ek eta. Síðan þótti mér sem hvelpar fagrir lægi fyrir mér ok gullu við hátt, ok át ek hræ þeira at mínum óvilja.'

Guðrún segir, ' Eigi eru draumar góðir, en eptir munu ganga. Synir þínir munu vera feigir, ok margir hlutir þungir munu oss at hendi koma.'

^a thus *Ol*, *B* (cf. *Guðr.* II 31); sína *V*

^b Grímhildir *Ol*, *B*; abbrev. in *V* could be expanded to Grímhildir or Grímhildi.

^c við um sonu sína, thus *Ol*, við sonu sína *V*, om. *B*

^d thus *Ol*, *B* (cf. *Guðr.* II, 35 ll. 5-9); fjóra *V*

^e The preceding ch. heading reads Guðrún reist rúnar.

‘Don’t force this king on me,’ said Gudrun. ‘From him there’ll come nothing but evil for this family, and he’ll deal evilly with your sons, and afterwards terrible vengeance will be taken on him.’

Her arguments made Grimhild unhappy about her sons ; she said :
‘Do as we ask and in return you shall have great honour and our friendship, and the districts of Vinbjorg and Valbjorg.’

Her words carried such weight that it had to be so.

‘Then so it must be,’ said Gudrun, ‘though against my will, and there’ll be little cause for rejoicing, but rather for grief.’

Then the men mounted their horses and the women were given carriages, and thus they journeyed a week on horse-back, another week on board ship, and a third over land, until they reached a lofty hall. A great crowd went to meet her, and a magnificent feast had been got ready there, word having previously passed between them, and it proceeded with great pomp and circumstance. And Atli married Gudrun at this feast. But her heart never smiled upon him and they had little happiness from their life together.

35

Now the story goes that one night King Atli awoke from his sleep. He spoke to Gudrun :

‘I dreamed,’ he said, ‘that you lunged at me with a sword.’

Gudrun interpreted the dream and said that to dream of iron meant fire—

‘And the conceit of thinking yourself superior to everyone.’

‘I had another dream,’ said Atli. ‘It seemed as if two reeds had sprung up here, and I wished never to harm them. Then they were torn up by the roots and reddened in blood and carried to the bench and given me to eat. I had another dream : two hawks flew from my wrist, but they found no prey and perished.¹ It seemed to me as if their hearts were mingled with honey, and I thought I ate of them. Then it seemed to me as if there were fine young dogs lying before me, and at this they yelped aloud, and I ate their flesh against my will.’

‘These are not good dreams,’ said Gudrun, ‘and they’ll be fulfilled. Your sons are surely doomed and many trials will come upon us.’

I thus Ol, þóttu V

¹ Literally : ‘Went to Hel’ (q.v. in Glossary)

‘ Þat dreymði mik enn, ’ segir hann, ‘ at ek lægi í kof, ok væri ráðinn bani minn.’

Nú líðr þetta, ok er þeira samvista fálíg.

Nú íhugar Atli konungr hvar niðr mun komit þat mikla gull er átt hafði Sigurðr, en þat veit nú Gunnarr konungr ok þeir bræðr.

Atli var mikill konungr ok ríkr, vitr ok fjölmennr; gerir nú ráð við sína menn hversu með skal fara. Hann veit at þeir Gunnarr eigu miklu meira fé en né einir menn megi við þá jafnask; tekr nú þat ráð at senda menn á fund þeira bræðra ok bjóða þeim til veizlu ok at söema þá mörögum hlutum. Sá maðr var fyrir þeim er Vingi er nefndr.

Dróttningin veit nú þeira einmæli ok grunar at vera muni vélar við bræðr hennar. Guðrún rístr rúnar, ok hon tekr einn gullhring ok knýtti í vargshár ok fær þetta í hendr sendimönnum konungs. Síðan fóru þeir eptir konungs boði. Ok áðr þeir stigi á land, sá Vingi rúnarnar ok sneri á aðra leið ok at Guðrún fýsti í rúnum at þeir kvæmi á hans fund. Síðan kómu þeir til hallar Gunnars konungs, ok var tekit við þeim vel, ok gervir fyrir þeim eldar stórir. Ok síðan drukku þeir með gleði inn bezta drykk. Þá mælti Vingi:

‘ Atli konungr sendir “ mik hingat, ok vildi at þit sættið hann heim með miklum sóma ok þægið af honum mikinn sóma, hjálma ok skjöldu, sverð ok brynjur, gull ok góð klæði, herlið ok hesta ok mikit lén, ok ykkir lézk hann bezt unna síns ríkis.’

Þá brá Gunnarr hofði ok mælti til Hognar,

‘ Hvat skulum vit af þessu boði þiggja? Hann býðr okkr at þiggja mikit ríki, en enga konunga veit ek jafnmikit gull eiga sem okkr, því at vit hofum þat gull allt er á Gnitahæiði lá, ok eigum vit stórar skemmur fullar af gulli ok inum beztum höggvápnnum ok alls konar herklæðum. Veit ek minn hestinn beztan ok sverðit hvassast, gullit ágætast.’

Hogni svarar, ‘ Undrumk ek boð hans, því at þat hefir hann sjaldan gert, ok óráðligt mun vera at fara á hans fund, ok þat undrumk ek, er ek sá gersimar þær er Atli konungr sendi okkr, at ek sá vargshári knýtt í einn gullhring, ok má vera at Guðrúnu þykki hann úlfshug við okkr hafa ok vili hon eigi at vit farim.’

Vingi sýnir honum nú rúnarnar þær er hann kvað Guðrúnu sent hafa.

Nú gengr alþýða at sofa, en þeir drukku við nokkura menn. Þá gekk at kona Hognar er hét Kostbera, kvenna fríðust, ok leit á rúnarnar.

^a *B emends to sendi (cf. Akv. 3, l. 1).*

‘I had another dream,’ he said. ‘I was lying in bed and my death had been plotted.’

Then it was over, but they knew no affection in their life together.

King Atli then wondered what had become of all the gold that Sigurd had possessed, but that was now known to King Gunnar and his brother. Atli was a great and powerful king, he was clever and had many subjects. He now took counsel with his men as to how he should proceed. He knew that Gunnar and his family had far greater riches and that no one could be compared to them. He now decided to send men to visit the brothers and to invite them to a feast and to honour them in many ways. They were led by a man named Vingi.

The queen knew of their private talks and suspected treachery against her brothers. Gudrun carved runes, and she took a gold ring and knotted to it a hair from a wolf and handed it to the king’s envoys. They then set off as the king had commanded. But before they went ashore Vingi saw the runes and altered them, making it seem as if Gudrun urged them in the runes to come and visit him. Then they came to King Gunnar’s hall and they were made welcome and large fires were lighted for them. After that they drank merrily the best of drink. Then Vingi spoke :

‘King Atli sends me here, desiring you to visit him in great honour, and to receive from him great honour, helmets and shields, swords and coats of mail, gold and fine apparel, troops and horses and broad lands in fee—and upon you both, he declared, he is best pleased to bestow his power.’

Then Gunnar turned his head and said to Hogni :

‘How are we to receive this offer ? He invites us to assume great power, but I know of no kings who possess as much gold as we do, for we have all the gold that lay on Gnitahaid, and we have great rooms full of gold, the finest cutting weapons and armour of all kinds. I know my horse is the finest, my sword the sharpest, and the gold fabulous.’

‘I’m surprised at his offer,’ replied Hogni, ‘for he has seldom done this sort of thing, and it would be ill-advised to go and visit him—and I was surprised to see a wolf’s hair knotted to a gold ring when I looked at the jewels King Atli sent us, and it may be that Gudrun thinks he has wolfish feelings towards us, and that she doesn’t want us to go.’

Vingi now showed him the runes which he said Gudrun had sent.

Everyone now went to bed but they remained drinking with a few men. Then Hogni’s wife, whose name was Kostbera, a very beautiful woman, went up and looked at the runes. Gunnar’s wife was named

Kona Gunnars hét Glaumvör, skörungr mikill. Þær skenktu. Konungar gerðusk allmjök drukknir. Þat finnr Vingi ok mælti,

‘Ekki er því at leyndu at Atli konungr er þungfærr mjök ok gamlaðr mjök at verja sitt ríki, en synir hans ungr ok til engis færir. Nú vill hann gefa yðr vald yfir ríkinu meðan þeir eru svá ungr, ok ann yðr bezt at njóta.’

Nú var bæði at Gunnarr var mjök drukkinn, en boðit mikit ríki, mátti ok eigi við sköpum vinna, heitr nú ferðinni ok segir Högn, bróður sínum.

Hann svarar, ‘Yðart atkvæði mun standa hljóta, ok fylgja mun ek þér, en ófúss em ek þessarar ferðar.’

Ok er menn höfðu drukkit sem líkaði, þá fóru þeir at sofa. Tekr Kostbera at líta á rúnarnar ok innti stafina, ok sá at annat var á ristit en undir var, ok villtar váru rúnarnar. Hon fekk þó skilit af vizku sinni. Eptir þat ferr hon til rekkju hjá bónda sínum. Ok er þau vöknudu, mælti hon til Högna,

‘Heiman ætlar þú, ok er þat óráðligt. Far heldr í annat sinn, ok eigi muntu vera glöggrýnn ef þér þykkir sem hon hafi í þetta sinn boðit þér, systir þín. Ek réð rúnarnar, ok undrumk ek um svá vitra konu er hon hefir villt ristit. En svá er undir sem bani yðarr liggi á, en þar var annathvært at henni varð vant stafs, eða elligar hafa aðrir villt. Ok nú skaltu heyra draum minn.’

36

‘Þat ^a dreymði mik at mér þótti hér falla inn á harðla ströng ok bryti upp stokka í hollinni.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þér eruð opt illúðgar, ok á ek ekki skap til þess at fara illu í mót við menn, nema þat sé makligt. Mun hann oss vel fagna.’

Hon segir, ‘Þér munuð reyna, en eigi mun vinátta fylgja boðinu. Ok enn dreymði mik at önnur á felli hér inn ok þyti grimmliga ok bryti upp alla palla í hollunni ok bryti fœtr ykkra beggja bræðra, ok mun þat vera nokkut.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þar munu renna akrar er þú hugðir ána, ok er vér göngum akrinn, nema opt stórar agnir fœtr vára.’

‘Þat dreymði mik,’ segir hon, ^b ‘at blæja þín brynni, ok hryti eldrinn upp af hollunni.’

^a The preceding ch. heading reads Högni réð drauma konu sínar.

^b thus Ol, om. V

Glaumvor, she was of great presence and character. The women poured out and the kings became very drunk. Vingi noticed this and spoke :

‘There’s no hiding the fact that King Atli is very infirm and very advanced in years for defending his kingdom, and his sons are young and fit for nothing. He now desires to give you control of the kingdom while they are so young. It is you he wishes to profit by this.’

Now it happened that Gunnar was very drunk, and also that great power had been offered, nor could he fight against destiny—he now promised to make the journey, and informed his brother Hogni.

‘Your decision will have to stand,’ he answered, ‘and I shall accompany you, but I’m not enthusiastic about the journey.’

And when the men had drunk all they wanted, they went to bed. Kostbera began looking at the runes and read the characters and saw that something different had been carved over them from what was underneath, and the runes were confusing. But by reason of her astuteness she managed to see through them. After this she went to bed and lay at her husband’s side. And when they awoke she said to Hogni :

‘You mean to set off, but that’s unwise. Better go another time. And you’re not so good at reading runes if you think your sister is sending for you on this occasion. I read the runes and I’m surprised if such a clever woman carved them in a confused way. But underneath your death seems to be shown, and either she missed out a letter, or else others tampered with them. And now you must hear my dream.’

36

‘I dreamed that a raging river seemed to sweep in and it smashed up the partition posts in the hall.’

‘You’re often distrustful,’ he answered, ‘but I’ve no mind to expect evil from people without cause. He will welcome us.’

‘You’ll find out,’ she said, ‘but there’s nothing friendly about the offer. I again dreamed that another river swept raging in and it smashed up all the benches in the hall, and it smashed your legs and your brother’s, and that must mean something.’

‘Cornfields run where you thought there was a river,’ he answered, ‘and when we go through a cornfield big husks often cling to our legs.’

‘I dreamed,’ she said, ‘that your bed-clothes were blazing and that fire was shooting up from the hall.’

Hann svarar, 'Þæt veit ek gerla hvat þat er. Klæði vár liggja hér lítt rækt, ok munu þau þar brenna er þú hugðir blæjuna.'

'Björn hugða ek hér inn koma,' segir hon, 'ok braut upp konungs háæt, ok hristi svá hrammana at vér urðum ǫll hrædd, ok hafði oss ǫll senn sér í munni svá at ekki máttum vér, ok stóð þar af mikil ógn.'

Hann svarar, 'Þar mun koma veðr mikit er þú ætlaðir hvítabjörn.'

'Ǫrn þótti mér hér inn koma,' segir hon, 'ok eptir hǫllunni, ok dreifði mik blóði ok oss ǫll, ok mun þat illt vita, því at mér þótti sem þat væri hamr Atla konungs.'

Hann svarar, 'Opt slátrum vér ǫrliga ok hǫggum stór naut oss at gamni, ok er þat fyrir yxnum er ǫrnu dreymir, ok mun heill hugr Atla við oss.'

Ok nú hætta þau þessu tali.

37

Nú ^a er at segja frá Gunnari at þar er sams dæmi er þau vakna, at Glaumvǫr, kona Gunnars, segir drauma sína marga, þá er henni þóttu líkligir til svika, en Gunnarr réð alla því á móti.

'Þessi var einn af þeim,' sagði hon, 'at mér þótti blóðugt sverð borit hér inn í hǫllina, ok vartu sverði lagðr í gegnum, ok emjuðu úlfar á báðum endum sverðsins.'

Konungrinn svarar, 'Smáir hundar vilja oss þar bíta, ok er opt hundagnǫll fyrir vápnum með blóði lituðum.'

Hon mælti, 'Enn þótti mér hér inn koma konur, ok váru daprligar, ok þik ^b kjósa sér til manns. Má vera at þínar dísir hafi þat verit.'

Hann svarar, 'Vant gerisk nú at ráða, ok má ekki forðask sitt aldrlag, en eigi ólíkt at vér verðum skammær.'

Ok um morgininn spretta þeir upp ok vilja fara, en aðrir lǫttu. Síðan mælti Gunnarr við þann mann er Fjǫrnir hét,

'Statt upp ok gef oss at drekka af stórum kerum gott vín, því at vera má at sjá sé vár in síðarsta veizla, ok nú mun inn gamli úlfrinn komask at gullinu ef vér deyjum, ok svá ^c björninn mun eigi spara at bíta sínum vígtǫnnum.'

Síðan leiddi liðit þá út með gráti.

Sonr Hǫgna mælti,

^a *Ol reads the preceding ch. heading as Heimanferð þeira bræðra; Heiman now illeg.*

^b *Perhaps ok vildu þik, remarks Ol, citing B (cf. Am. 28, l. 4 and ok vill hann kjósa p. 75), and notes that o in ok might be corrected from v.*

^c *thus Ol, sá V, cf. p. 21^c*

‘I know just what that is,’ he answered. ‘Our clothes are lying here carelessly, and these are what will burn though your thoughts were running on bed-clothes.’

‘I thought a bear came in,’ she said, ‘and smashed up the king’s dais and menaced us with his paws so that we were all frightened, and he had all of us in his mouth together so that we were helpless, and this caused great terror.’

‘A violent storm will come,’ he answered, ‘where you thought there was a polar bear.’

‘I thought an eagle came in,’ she said, ‘right down the hall, and spattered me, and all of us with blood, and that foreshadows evil, for it looked to me like the fetch of King Atli.’

‘We do a lot of slaughtering,’ he answered, ‘and we kill large beasts for our enjoyment, and dreaming about an eagle has to do with oxen, and Atli is sure to be well-disposed towards us.’

And now they stopped talking about it.

37

Of Gunnar we are now told that when they woke up the same thing happened—Glaumvor, Gunnar’s wife, told of her many dreams which to her seemed to point to treachery, but Gunnar gave an opposite explanation.

‘This was one of them,’ she said. ‘I thought a bloody sword was brought into the hall and you were run through with the sword, and at both ends of the sword there were howling wolves.’

‘Small hounds will snap at me, and blood-stained weapons often stand for the snarling of dogs,’ answered the king.

‘Then again,’ she said, ‘I thought that women came in. They looked downcast and they chose you as their husband. They may have been your disir.’

‘It’s now getting hard to give an interpretation,’ he replied, ‘and no one can escape his fate, nor is it unlikely that I’m soon to die.’

And in the morning they jumped up and wanted to be off, but others tried to dissuade them. Then Gunnar addressed a man called Fjornir.

‘Up and give us great goblets of good wine to drink. This may be our last festive occasion. And now the old wolf will get the gold if we die, nor will the bear be slow to use his fangs.’

Then amidst weeping the retainers sent them on their way.

Hogni’s son said :

‘Farið vel ok hafið ^a góðan tíma.’

Eptir var meiri hlutr liðs þeira. Sólarr ok Snævarr,^b synir Högna, fóru, ok einn kappi mikill er Orkningar hét. Hann var bróðir Beru.¹ Fólkit fylgði þeim til skipa, ok létu allir þá fararinnar, en ekki tjóaði. Þá mælti Glaumvör,

‘Vingi,’ segir hon, ‘meiri ván at mikil óhamingja standi af þinni kvámu, ok munu stórtíðendi gerask í for þinni.’

Hann svarar, ‘Þess sver ek at ek lýg eigi, ok mik taki hár gálgi ok allir gramir ef ek lýg nokkurt orð.’ Ok lítt eirði hann sér í slíkum orðum. Þá mælti Bera,

‘Farið vel ok með góðum tíma.’

Hogni svarar, ‘Verið kátar, hversu sem með oss ferr.’

Þar skiljask þau með sínum forlögum.

Síðan reru þeir svá fast ok af miklu afli at kjölrinn gekk undan skipinu mjök svá hálf. Þeir knúðu fast árar með stórum bakföllum, svá at brotnuðu hlumir ok háir. Ok er þeir kómu at landi, festu þeir ekki skip sín. Síðan riðu þeir sínum ágætum hestum myrkan skóg um hríð. Nú sjá þeir konungsbæinn. Þangat heyra þeir mikinn gny ok vápnabrák ok sjá þar mannfjöldu ok mikinn viðrbúnað er þeir höfðu, ok öll borgarhlið váru full af mönnum. Þeir ríða at borginni, ok var hon byrgð. Hogni braut upp hliðit, ok ríða nú í borgina. Þá mælti Vingi.

‘Þetta mættir þú vel ógert hafa, ok bíðið nú hér meðan ek sæki yðr gálgatré. Ek bað yðr með blíðu hér koma, en flátt bjó undir. Nú mun skammt at bíða áðr þér munuð upp festir.’

Hogni svarar, ‘Eigi munu vér fyrir þér vægja, ok lítt hygg ek at vér hrykkim þar er menn skyldu berjask, ok ekki tjóar þér oss at hræða, ok þat mun þér illa gefask.’

Hrundu honum síðan ok börðu hann oxarhómrum til bana.

38

Þeir ^c ríða nú at konungshöllinni. Atli konungr skipar liði sínu til orrostu, ok svá vikusk fylkingar at garðr nokkurr varð í millum þeira.

^a *Crossed out with insertion marks, but nothing in margin, and B conjectures með, cf. same expression a few lines below.*

^b *thus Ol, cf. Am. 30 and Dr., gnævar V*

^c *The preceding ch. heading reads Orrosta i borginni ok s', presumably sigr.*

¹ *i.e. Kostbera, here and below*

‘Fare well and good luck.’

The majority of the retainers stayed behind. Hogni’s sons, Solar and Snævar, went, as did a man named Orkning, a great warrior. He was Bera’s¹ brother. The household went with them to the ships, and all tried to dissuade them from the journey, but without avail. Then Glaumvor spoke :

‘Vingi,’ she said, ‘it’s very likely that your arrival here spelt disaster, and great events will follow from your departure.’

‘I swear I’m not lying,’ he answered, ‘and may a high gallows and all the fiends take me if I’m telling a single word of a lie.’ And he didn’t in the least spare himself in the use of such expressions. Then Bera spoke :

‘Fare well and good luck go with you.’

‘Be cheerful,’ said Hogni, ‘however things go with us.’

There they parted, each following his destiny.

They rowed with might and main, so stoutly, that well-nigh half the keel came away from the ship. They pulled at the oars with such great sweeps that oar looms and gunwale-pins broke. And when they reached land, they did not make fast their ships. Then for a while they rode on their noble horses through a dark wood. They now saw the royal dwelling. They heard a great din from there and the clatter of arms, and saw a large number of men there and the great preparations they were making, and the castle gates were crowded with men. They rode up to the castle but it was shut. Hogni forced open the gate and now they rode into the castle. Then Vingi spoke :

‘You would have been well advised not to do this, and now wait here while I seek out a gallows-tree for you. I asked you to come here in friendly fashion, but there was deceit behind it. It won’t be long now before you’re strung up.’

‘We’ll not yield to you,’ answered Hogni, ‘and I hardly think we would shrink back where men should fight, and frightening us won’t help you, and this is going to turn out badly for you.’

Then they knocked him down and beat him to death with the back of their axes.

They now rode up to the king’s hall. King Atli drew up his men for battle, the troops so positioned that there was a court-yard between them.

‘ Verið velkomnir með oss,’ segir hann,^a ‘ ok fáíð mér gull þat it mikla er vér erum til komnir, þat fé er Sigurðr átti en nú á Guðrún.’

Gunnarr segir, ‘ Aldri fær þú þat fé, ok dugandi menn munu þér hér fyrir hitta áðr vér látim lífit, ef þér bjóðið oss ófrið. Kann vera at þú veitir þessa veizlu stórmannliga ok af lítilli eyms við qrn ok úlf.’

‘ Fyrir lqngu hafða ek þat mér í hug,’ segir Atli,^b ‘ at ná yðru lífi, en ráða gullinu ok launa yðr þat níðingsverk er þér svikuð yðarn inn bezta mág, ok skal ek hans hefna.’

Hqgni svarar, ‘ Þat kemr yðr verst at haldi at liggja lengi á þessu ráði, en eruð^c þó at engu búmir.’

Nú slær í orrostu harða, ok er fyrst skothríð. Ok nú koma fyrir Guðrúnu tíðendin. Ok er hon heyrir þetta, verðr hon við gneypp ok kastar af sér skikkjunni. Eptir þat gekk hon út ok heilsaði þeim er komnir váru, ok kyssti bræðr sína ok sýndi þeim ást, ok þessi var þeira kvæða in síðarsta. Þá mælti hon,

‘ Ek þóttumk ráð hafa við sett at eigi kæmi þér, en engi má við skopum vinna.’ Þá mælti hon, ‘ Mun nokkut tjóa at leita um sættir?’

En allir neituðu því þverliga. Nú sér hon at sárt er leikit við bræðr hennar; hygr nú á harðræði, fór í brynju ok tók sér sverð ok bardisk með bræðrum sínum, ok gekk svá fram sem inn hraustasti karlmaðr, ok þat sqgðu allir á einn veg at varla sæi meiri vqrn en þar. Nú gerisk mikit mannfall, ok berr þó af framganga þeira bræðra. Orrostan stendr nú lengi fram, allt um miðjan dag. Gunnarr ok Hqgni gengu í gegnum fylkingar Atla konungs, ok svá er sagt at allr vqllr flaut í blóði. Synir Hqgna ganga nú hart fram.

Atli konungr mælti, ‘ Vér hqfðum^d lið mikit ok frítt, ok stóra kappa, en nú eru margir af oss fallnir, ok eigum vér yðr illt at launa—drepit nítján kappa mína, en ellifu^e einir eru eptir.’

Ok verðr hvíld á bardaganum.

Þá mælti Atli konungr,

‘ Fjórir váru vér bræðr, ok em ek nú einn eptir. Ek hlaut mikla mægð, ok hugða ek mér þat til frama. Konu átta ek væna ok vitra, stórlynda ok harðúðga, en ekki má ek njóta hennar vizku, því at sjaldan váru vit sátt. Þér hafíð nú drepit marga mína frændr, en svikit mik frá ríkinu ok fénu, ráðit systur mína, ok þat harmar mik mest.’

^a segir hann, *thus Ol, om. V*

^b segir Atli, *thus Ol, om. V*

^c *thus Ol (cf. Am. 43, l. 3), eru V*

^d *thus Ol foll. B (cf. Am. 53), hqfum V*

^e *thus Ol foll. B (cf. Am. 54) sex V*

‘Welcome among us,’ he said, ‘and give up all the gold to which I am entitled, the treasure that was Sigurd’s and is now Gudrun’s.’

‘You’ll never get the treasure,’ said Gunnar, ‘and you’ll find intrepid men here before we die, if you show us hostility. It may be that you will furnish this feast sumptuously, with little stinting of eagle or wolf.’

‘It’s long been in my mind to bring about your death,’ said Atli, ‘and get control of the gold, and reward you for your infamy in betraying your distinguished brother-in-law, and I shall avenge him.’

‘You do worst in having planned this for a long time,’ answered Hogni, ‘and yet you are now ready for nothing.’

A fierce battle now began, and there was first a shower of missiles. And now the news reached Gudrun. And when she heard about it she grew angry and flung off her mantle. After that she went out and greeted those who had come, and kissed her brothers, and showed them affection, and this was their last exchange of greetings. Then she spoke :

‘I thought I’d found a way to stop you coming. But no one can fight against destiny.’ Then she said : ‘Is there any use in trying for a reconciliation ?’

But to this they all flatly said no. She now saw that her brothers were having a hard time of it, and so she decided on stern action. She put on a coat of mail, took up a sword and fought alongside her brothers, and advanced to the attack as boldly as the boldest man, and everyone said the same, that they would hardly see a stouter defence than that. Casualties were now heavy, but the valour of the brothers surpassed that of all others. Now the battle went on for a long time, until well past midday. Gunnar and Hogni fought their way through King Atli’s troops, and it is said that the field was all running with blood. Hogni’s sons now pressed forward fiercely.

‘I had a large and splendid body of men, and great champions,’ said King Atli. ‘But many of us have now fallen, and we have evil to thank you for—nineteen of my champions slain and only eleven left.’

And then there was a lull in the fighting.

Then King Atli spoke :

‘There were four of us brothers, and now I alone am left. I allied myself by marriage to a great family, and thought it would be to my advantage. I had a wife—she was beautiful and wise, magnanimous and resolute, but I cannot profit by her wisdom, for we were rarely on good terms. Now you have slain many of my kinsmen, cheated me of dominion and riches, and brought about my sister’s death, and this it is that grieves me most.’

Hogni segir, 'Hví getr þú slíks? Þér brugðuð fyrri friði. Þú tókt mína frændkonu ok sveltir í hel ok myrðir ok tókt féit, ok var þat eigi konungligt, ok hlægligt þykkir mér er þú tínir þinn harm, ok goðunum vil ek þat þakka er þér gengr illa.'

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Nú ^a eggjar Atli konungr liðit at gera harða sókn. Berjask nú snarpliga ok sækja Gjúkungar at svá fast at Atli konungr hrökk inn í hollina, ok berjask nú inni, ok var orrostan allhörd. Sjá bardagi varð með miklu mannsPELLI, ok lýkr svá at fellr allt lið þeira brœðra, svá at þeir standa tveir upp, ok fór áðr margr maðr til heljar fyrir þeira vápnunum. Nú er sótt at Gunnari konungi, ok fyrir sakir ofreflis var hann höndum tekinn ok í fjotra settr. Síðan bardisk Hogni af mikilli hreysti ok drengskap, ok felldi ina stærstu kappa Atla konungs tuttugu. Hann hratt mörqum í þann eld er þar var gerr í hollunni. Allir urðu á eitt sáttir, at varla sæi slíkan mann. En þó varð hann at lyktum ofriði borinn ok höndum tekinn.

Atli konungr mælti,

'Mikil furða er þat hvé margr maðr hér hefir farit fyrir honum. Nú skeri ór honum hjartat, ok sé þat hans bani.'

Hogni mælti,

'Geri sem þér líkar. Glæðliga mun ek hér bíða þess er þér vilið at gera, ok þat muntu skilja at eigi er hjarta mitt hrætt, ok reynt hefi ek fyrr harða hluti, ok var ek gjarn at þola mannraun, þá er ek var ósárr. En nú eru vér mjök sárir, ok muntu einn ^b ráða várum skiptum.'

Þá mælti ráðgjafi Atla konungs,

'Sé ek betra ráð. Tökum heldr þrælinn Hjalla,¹ en forðum Högna. Þræll þessi er skapdaudi. Hann lifir eigi svá lengi at hann sé eigi dáligr.'

Þrællinn heyrir ok æpir hátt ok hleypr undan, hvert er honum þykkir skjóls ván. Kvezk illt hljóta af ófriði þeira ok váss at gjalda. Kveðr þann dag illan vera er hann skal deyja frá sínum góðum kostum ok svína geymslu. Þeir þrifu hann ok brugðu at honum knífi. Hann cepti hátt áðr hann kenndi oddsins.^c

Þá mælti Hogni sem færur er títt, þá er í mannraun koma, at ^d hann árnaði þrælinum lífs ok kvezk eigi vilja skræktun heyra,^e kvað sér

^a The preceding ch. heading reads Hogni handtekinn.

^b thus Ol, enn V

^c thus Ol, B; half n with s in lacuna V

^d thus Ol foll. B; lacuna V

^e thus Ol foll. B, cf. Am. 64 l. 8; lacuna V

¹ According to Am., st. 62, Hjalli was the cook.

‘Why talk like that?’ said Hogni. ‘You were the first to break the peace. You seized my kinswoman and starved her to death, murdering her and seizing her wealth, and that was no kingly act, and I think it ridiculous for you to enlarge on your grief, and I’ll thank the gods that things are going badly with you.’

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And now King Atli urged on his troops to make a violent onslaught. Now they fought gallantly, but the Gjukungs attacked so strongly that King Atli was forced back into the hall, and now they fought inside and the battle was fierce. The fighting was accompanied by great slaughter and it ended with all the brothers’ troops falling so that just the two of them were left standing, and many a man soon went down before their weapons. King Gunnar was now the object of attack, and because of overwhelming odds he was taken prisoner and put in irons. Then Hogni fought with great valour and courage, and felled King Atli’s greatest champions, twenty of them. Many he thrust into the fire that was burning in the hall. On one point they were all agreed, that they hardly ever saw a man like him. Yet in the end he was overpowered and taken prisoner.

King Atli spoke :

‘It’s quite astounding how many men have met their doom at his hands. Now cut out his heart and so let him die.’

Hogni spoke :

‘Do as you please. I’ll cheerfully await what you intend to do, and you’ll see that my heart is unafraid, and I’ve experienced grim ordeals before, and when unwounded I readily submitted to trials of valour. But I am now badly wounded, and you alone will settle the account.’

Then a counsellor of King Atli’s spoke :

‘I’ve a better plan. Let’s seize Hjalli¹ the thrall instead, and spare Hogni. The thrall deserves to die. He’d not live long enough to be anything but contemptible.’

The thrall heard, screamed loudly and ran off to where he thought he’d likely be safe. He said he was suffering for their quarrels, and thus he paid for his hard life. He said it was an evil day if he was to die and leave his good food and his pig-keeping. They seized him and turned a knife on him. He screamed loudly before he felt the point.

Then Hogni spoke in a way that not many are accustomed to do when they get into sore straits : he pleaded for the thrall’s life—he

minna fyrir at fremja þenna leik. Þrællinn varð þiggja^a þá fjörít. Nú eru þeir báðir í fjöttra settir, Gunnarr ok Hogni.^b Þá mælti Atli konungr til Gunnars konungs at hann skyldi segja til gullins, ef hann vill lífit þiggja.

Hann svarar, 'Fyrr skal ek sjá hjarta Hogni, bróður míns, blóðugt.'

Ok nú þrifu þeir þrællinn í annat sinn, ok skáru ór honum hjartat ok báru fyrir konunginn Gunnar.

Hann svarar, 'Hjarta Hjalla má hér sjá ins blauða, ok er ólíkt hjarta Hogni ins frækna, því at nú skelfr mjök, en hálfu meir, þá er í brjósti honum lá.'

Nú gengu þeir eptir eggjun Atla konungs at Hogni, ok skáru ór honum hjartat. Ok svá var mikill þróttr hans at hann hló meðan hann beið þessa kvöl, ok allir undruðusk þrek hans, ok þat er síðan at minnum haft. Þeir sýndu Gunnari hjarta Hogni.

Hann svarar, 'Hér má sjá hjarta Hogni^c ins frækna, ok er ólíkt hjarta Hjalla ins blauða því at nú hrærisk lítt, en miðr meðan í brjósti honum lá. Ok svá muntu, Atli, láta þitt líf, sem nú látum vér. Ok nú veit ek einn hvar gullit er, ok mun eigi Hogni segja þér. Mér lék ýmist í hug, þá er vit lífðum báðir, en nú hefi ek einn ráðit fyrir mér. Skal Rín nú ráða gullinu^d fyrir en Hýnir beri þat á höndum sér.'

Atli konungr mælti, 'Farið á brott með bandingjann.^e Ok svá var gert.

Guðrún kveðr nú með sér menn ok hittir Atla ok segir,^f

'Gangi þér nú illa ok eptir því sem þér helduð orð við mik ok Gunnar.^g'

Nú er Gunnarr konungr settr í einn ormgarð. Þar vátu margir ormar fyrir, ok vátu hendr^h hans fast bundnar. Guðrún sendi honum hörpu eina, en^h hann sýndi sína list ok sló hörpuna með mikilli list, at hann drap strengina með tánum, ok lék svá vel ok afbragðliga at fáir þóttusk heyrt hafa svá með höndum slegit, ok þar til lék hann þessa íprótt at allir sofnuðu ormarnir, nema ein naðra mikil ok illilíg skreið til hans ok gróf inn sínum rana þar til er hon hjó hans hjarta, ok þar lét hann sitt líf með mikilli hreysti.

^a thus *Ol* foll. *B*, cf. *Am.* 63 l. 10 ; lacuna *V*

^b ok Hogni, thus *Ol* foll. *B* ; lacuna *V*

^c Hann svarar-Hogni, thus *Ol*, *B* (cf. *Akv.* 25) ; om. *V*

^d thus *Ol*, *B* ; first i and half n in lacuna *V*

^e ok segir, thus *Ol* foll. *B* ; lacuna *V*

^f thus *Ol* foll. *B*, cf. *Akv.* 30 ; lacuna *V*

^g thus *Ol* foll. *B* ; lacuna *V*

^h eina, en, thus *Ol*, *B* ; lacuna *V*

didn't want to hear the shrieking, he said, and declared it was an easier matter for him to play out the game himself. So the thrall's life was spared. Gunnar and Hogni were now both put in irons. King Atli then told King Gunnar that he must reveal the whereabouts of the gold if he wanted his life spared.

'I must first see my brother Hogni's bloody heart,' he answered.

And now they seized the thrall again, cut out his heart and brought it to King Gunnar.

'What we can see here,' he answered, 'is the heart of that coward Hjalli. It's not like gallant Hogni's heart, for it is quaking violently now, and did so far more when in his breast.'

Then, urged on by Atli, they made for Hogni and cut out his heart. And so great was his valour that he stood the agony laughing, and they were all astounded at his courage, and it has never been forgotten. They showed Gunnar Hogni's heart.

'Here we can see the gallant Hogni's heart,' he answered, 'and it's not like the heart of that coward Hjalli for it is not trembling much now, and did so still less when in his breast. And you, Atli, will lose your life as we are now losing ours. And now I alone know where the gold is, and Hogni won't tell you. My mind was uneasy while we were both alive, but now the decision is mine alone. The Rhine shall have the gold¹ before Huns wear it on their arms.'

'Away with the prisoner,' said King Atli. And it was done.

Gudrun now called on some men to go with her, sought out Atli and said:

'May things now go badly for you—in the way that you kept your word to me and Gunnar.'

King Gunnar was now put into a snake pit where there were many snakes, and his hands were tightly bound together. Gudrun sent a harp to him and he showed his skill in that he struck the strings with his toes, playing with great skill, and he performed so outstandingly well that few thought they'd heard playing such as that even with the hands, and he plied this art until all the snakes fell asleep, except for one large, vicious adder that slid up to him and dug in its snout until it struck into his heart, and he died there with great courage.

¹ Hogni's statement does not necessarily imply that the gold had actually been sunk in the Rhine, but merely that he would prefer the Rhine to have it rather than the Huns. (See R. C. Boer's note to *Akv.*, st. 27, ll. 5-8.)

Atli ^a konungr þóttisk nú hafa unnit mikinn sigr, ok sagði Guðrúnu svá sem með nokkuru spotti eða svá sem hann hældisk :

‘ Guðrún, ’ segir hann, ‘ misst hefir þú nú bræðra þinna, ok veldr þú því sjálf.’

Hon svarar, ‘ Vel líkar þér nú er þú lýsir vígum þessum fyrir mér. En vera má at þú iðrisk, þá er þú reynir þat er eptir kemr, ok sú mun erfðin lengst eptir lifa at týna eigi grimðinni, ok mun þér eigi vel ganga meðan ek lifi.’

Hann svarar, ‘ Vit skulum nú gera okkra sætt, ok vil ek bæta þér bræðr þína með gulli ok dýrum gripum eptir þínum vilja.’

Hon svarar, ‘ Lengi hefi ek eigi verit hæg viðreignar, ok mátti um hræfa meðan Hogni lifði. Muntu ok aldri bæta bræðr mína svá at mér hugni, en opt verðu vér konurnar ríki bornar af yðru valdi. Nú eru mínir frændr allir dauðir, ok muntu nú einn við mik ráða. Mun ek nú þenna kost upp taka, ok látum gera mikla veizlu, ok vil ek nú erfa bræðr mína ok svá þína frændr.’

Gerir hon sik nú blíða í orðum, en þó var samt undir raunar. Hann var talhlýðinn ok trúði á hennar orð, er hon gerði sér létt um ræður.

Guðrún gerir nú erfi eptir sína bræðr ok svá Atli konungr eptir sína menn, ok þessi veizla var við mikla svørfan.^b Nú hyggv Guðrún á harma sína ok sitr um þat at veita konungi nokkura mikla skømm. Ok um kveldit tók hon sonu þeira Atla konungs er þeir léku við stokki. Sveinarnir glúpnuðu ok spurðu hvat þeir skyldu.

Hon svarar, ‘ Spyrið eigi at. Bana skal ykkv báðum.’

Þeir svøruðu, ‘ Ráða muntu þörnum þínum sem þú vill, þat mun engi banna ‘ þér, en þér er skømm í at gera þetta.’

Síðan skar hon þá á háls.

Konungrinn spurði eptir hvar synir hans væri.

Guðrún svarar, ‘ Ek mun þat segja þér ok glaða þitt hjarta. Þú vaktir við oss mikinn harm þá er þú drapt bræðr mína. Nú skaltu heyra mína ræðu. Þú hefir misst þinna sona, ok eru þeira hausar hér at borðkerum hafðir,^d ok sjálfr drakktu þeira blóð við vín blandit. Síðan tók ek hjörtu þeira ok steikta ek á teini, en þú ázt.’

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads viðtal Atla ok Guðrúnar.*

^b *illeg. V*

^c *thus Ol, bana V*

^d *thus Ol, B (cf. Am. 82, l. 4) ; báðir V*

King Atli thought now that he had won a great victory, and he spoke to Gudrun somewhat mockingly, or as if he were boasting :

‘Gudrun,’ he said, ‘you’ve lost your brothers now, and it’s your own doing.’

‘You enjoy telling me of these killings now,’ she answered, ‘but you may be sorry when you find out what is to follow. Unceasing malice is the legacy that will longest survive, and while I’m alive things won’t go well for you.’

‘We must now be reconciled,’ he replied, ‘and I’ll compensate you for your brothers with gold and costly treasures in accordance with your own wishes.’

‘For a long time I’ve not been easy to get on with,’ she replied, ‘but it wasn’t too bad as long as Hogni was alive. And you will never pay compensation for my brothers so as to satisfy me—but we women are often subdued by your strength. My kinsmen are now all dead, and you alone have jurisdiction over me. I shall now accept the situation—and let us now give a great feast to honour the memory of my brothers, and of your kinsmen, too.’

And she now spoke agreeably, though at heart she was unchanged. He was easily taken in and trusted her words when she made herself cheerful of speech.

Gudrun now gave the funeral feast for her brothers, and King Atli did so for his men, and it was a turbulent banquet. Then Gudrun thought of her wrongs and watched for an opportunity to inflict some grievous shame upon the king. And in the evening she seized hold of the sons she’d had by King Atli as they were playing along the wall-bench. They were frightened and asked what was to happen to them.

‘Don’t ask that,’ she answered. ‘I’m going to kill you both.’

‘You can do what you like with your own children,’ they answered. ‘No one will prevent you, but this deed will bring shame upon you.’

Then she cut their throats.

The king inquired where his sons were.

‘I’ll tell you,’ replied Gudrun, ‘and gladden your heart. You caused me great suffering when you killed my brothers. Now you shall hear my words. You’ve lost your sons, and here are their skulls used as drinking cups and you yourself drank their blood mixed with wine. Then I took their hearts and roasted them on a spit and you’ve eaten them.’

Atli konungr svarar, 'Grimm ertu, er þú myrðir sonu þína ok gaft mér þeira hold at eta, ok skammt lætr þú illt í milli.'

Guðrún segir, 'Væri minn vili til at gera þér miklar skammir, ok verðr eigi fullilla farit við slíkan konung.'

Konungr mælti, 'Verra hefir þú gert en menn viti dæmi til, ok er mikil óvizza í slíkum harðræðum, ok makligt at þú værir á báli brennd ok barin áðr grjóti í hel, ok hefðir þú þat er þú ferr á leið.'

Hon svarar, 'Þú spár þat þér sjálfum, en ek mun hljóta annan dauða.'

Þau mæltusk við mǫrg heiptarorð.

Hǫgni átti son eptir er Niflungr hét. Hann hafði mikla heipt við Atla konung, ok sagði Guðrúnu at hann vildi hefna feðr síns. Hon tók því vel, ok gera ráð sín. Hon kvað mikit happ í ef þat yrði gert. Ok of kveldit, er konungr hafði drukkit, gekk hann til svefns. Ok er hann var sofnaðr, kom Guðrún þar ok sonr Hǫgna. Guðrún tók eitt sverð ok leggr fyrir brjóst Atla konungi. Véla þau um bæði ok sonr Hǫgna.

Atli konungr vaknar við sárit ok mælti,

'Eigi mun hér þurfa um at binda eða umbúð at veita. Eða hverr veitir mér þenna áverka?'

Guðrún segir, 'Ek veld nokkuru um, en sumu sonr Hǫgna.'

Atli konungr mælti, 'Eigi sœmði þér þetta at gera, þó at nokkur sǫk væri til, ok vartu mér gipt at frænda ráði, ok mund galt ek við þér, þrjá tigu góðra riddara ok sœmiligra meyja ok marga menn aðra, ok þó léztu þér eigi at hófi, nema þú réðir lǫndum þeim er átt hafði Buðli konungr, ok þína sværu léztu opt með gráti sitja.'

Guðrún mælti, 'Mart hefir þú mælt ósatt, ok ekki hirði ek þat, ok opt var ek óhæg í mínu skapi, en miklu jók þú á. Hér hefir verit opt mikil styrjöld í þínum garði, ok þorðusk opt frændr ok vinir, ok ýfðisk hvat við annat, ok var betri ævi vár þá er ek var með Sigurði. Drápum konunga ok réðum um eignir þeira ok gáfum grið þeim er svá vildu, en hǫfðingjar gengu á hendr oss, ok létum þann ríkan er svá vildi. Síðan misstum vér hans, ok var þat lítit at bera ekkju nafn, en

'You're a cruel woman,' replied King Atli, 'murdering your sons and giving me their flesh to eat, and you leave little interval between your evil deeds.'

'My heart would indeed be bent on bringing deep disgrace upon you,' said Gudrun. 'There's no treatment bad enough for a king like you.'

'The evil you've done is worse than any precedent men know of,' said the king, 'and there's great folly in such harshness, and you deserve to be burnt on a pyre after first being stoned to death—then you'd have got to where your path is leading.'

'You make this prophecy of yourself,' she replied, 'and I shall die a different death.'

Many bitter words passed between them.

Hogni left a son called Niflung. He felt a deep hatred towards King Atli, and told Gudrun that he wanted to avenge his father. She received this favourably, and they made their plans. She said it would be greatly to their advantage if it could be done. And in the evening when the king had done with drinking, he went to bed, and when he was asleep Gudrun came, and Hogni's son. Gudrun seized a sword and thrust it through King Atli's breast. The two had a hand in it, she and Hogni's son.

King Atli awoke with the wound.

'No need here for bandaging or treatment,' he said. 'Who inflicted this hurt on me?'

'I had a hand in it, and so did Hogni's son,' said Gudrun.

'There was no honour for you in doing this,' said King Atli, 'though you had some cause—but you were married to me with your family's consent, and I made you a marriage portion of thirty good horsemen and maidens such as befit you, and many other men, yet you said it would not be proper unless you had charge of the lands that King Budli had possessed, and you often had your mother-in-law in tears.'

'You've told many untruths,' said Gudrun, 'but I don't care about that, and I was often in an evil mood, but you greatly added to it. Here in your house there's often been a lot of trouble: friends and kinsmen often fought, and each provoked the other, and I had a better life when I was with Sigurd. We slew kings and did as we pleased with their domains, and we gave quarter to those who wanted it, and great men made submission to us, and we raised up any for the asking. Then I lost him, but to bear the name of widow was nothing—what grieves me most is that I came to you while before I was married to

þat harmar mik mest er ek kom til þín, en átt áðr inn ágæzta konung, ok aldri komtu svá ór orrostu at eigi bærir þú inn minna hlut.'

Atli konungr svarar, 'Eigi er þat satt, ok við slíkar fortölur batnar hvárigra hluti, því at vér höfum skarðan. Ger nú til mín sómasamliga, ok lát búa um lík mitt til ágætis.'

Hon segir, 'Þat mun ek gera at láta þér gera vegligan grøft, ok gera þér virðuliga steinþró, ok vefja ^a þik í fögrum dúkum, ok hyggja þér hverja þorf.'

Eptir þat deyr hann. En hon gerði sem hon hét. Síðan lét hon slá eldi í höllina. Ok er hirðin vaknaði við óttann, þá vildu menn eigi þola eldinn ok hjuggusk sjálfir ok fengu svá bana. Lauk þar ævi Atla konungs ok allrar hirðar hans.

Guðrún vildi nú eigi lifa eptir þessi verk, en endadagr hennar var eigi enn kominn.

Völsungar ok Gjúkungar, at því er menn segja, hafa verit mestir ofrhugar ok ríkismenn, ok svá finnsk í öllum fornkvæðum.

Ok nú stöðvaðisk þessi ófriðr ^b með þeima hætti at liðnum þessum tíðendum.

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Guðrún ^c átti dóttur við Sigurði er Svanhildir hét. Hon var allra kvenna vænst, ok hafði sngr augu sem faðir hennar svá at fár einn þorði at sjá undir hennar brýnn. Hon bar svá mjök af öðrum konum um vænleik sem sól af öðrum himintunglum.^d

Guðrún gekk eitt sinn til sævar, ok tók grjótt ^e í fang sér ok gekk á sæinn út, ok vildi tapa sér. Þá hófu hana stórar báurur fram eptir sjánum, ok fluttisk hon með þeira fulltingi ok kom um síðir til borgar Jónakrs konungs. Hann var ríkr konungr ok fjölmennr. Hann fekk Guðrúnar. Þeira börn váru þeir Hamðir ok Sqrli ok Erpr. Svanhildir var þar upp fædd.

^a -ja *illeg.* V

^b -frið- *illeg.* V

^c *The preceding ch. heading reads frá Guðrúnu.*

^d öðrum him- *illeg.* V

^e *illeg.* V

the noblest king. But you never came out of a battle without having had the worst of it.'

'That is not true,' replied King Atli. 'But arguing like this will improve neither your fate nor mine, for I've come off badly. Now act honourably towards me and see that I have a splendid funeral.'

'I shall have a magnificent tomb made for you,' she said, 'and a splendid stone sarcophagus, and wrap you in fine cloths, and think of everything needful for you.'

After this he died. And she did as she had promised. She then had the hall set on fire. And when the king's body-guard awoke in terror, the men would not face the fire, but cut each other down and in that way met their death. And this was the end of King Atli and of all his followers.

Gudrun had now no wish to live after these deeds. But her last day was not yet come.

The Volsungs and Gjukungs were, as people say, eminent men and the most dauntless, and this is found in all the ancient lays.

And that is how with these events the strife now ended.

41

Gudrun had a daughter by Sigurd whose name was Svanhild. She was the most beautiful of all women and she had her father's piercing eyes, so that few dared look her in the face. In her beauty she outshone other women as does the sun the other heavenly bodies.

Gudrun once went to the sea, took up an armful of stones and walked into the sea, intending to do away with herself. Then huge waves bore her along over the sea, and with their aid she was carried away and came at length to the castle of King Jonakr. He was a powerful king with a great following. He married Gudrun. Their children were Hamdir, Sorli and Erp. Svanhild was brought up there.

Jörmunrekr^{a1} hefir konungr heitit. Hann var ríkr konungr í þann tíma. Hans sonr hét Randverr. Konungr heimtir á tal son sinn ok mælti,

‘Þú skalt fara mína sendiför til Jónakrs konungs, ok minn ráðgjafi er Bikki heitir. Þar er upp fœdd Svanhildir, dóttir Sigurðar Fáfnisbana er ek veit fegrsta mey undir heimsólu. Hana vilda ek helzt eiga, ok hennar skaltu biðja til handa mér.’

Hann segir, ‘Skylt er þat, herra, at ek fara yðra sendiför.’

Lætr nú búa ferð þeira sœmiliga. Fara þeir nú unz þeir koma til Jónakrs konungs, sjá Svanhildi, þykkir^b mikils um vert hennar friðleik. Randverr heimti konung á tal ok mælti,

‘Jörmunrekr konungr vill bjóða yðr mægi sitt. Hefir hann spurn til Svanhildar, ok vill hann kjósa hana sér til konu, ok er ósýnt at hon sé gefin ríkara manni en hann er.’

Konungr segir at þat var virðuligt ráð,—

‘Ok er hann mjök frægr.’

Guðrún segir, ‘Valt^c er hamingjunn at treystask at eigi bresti hon.’

En með fýsing konungs ok qlu því er á lá, er þetta nú ráðit, ok ferr nú Svanhildir til skips með virðuligu foruneyti ok sat í lyptingu hjá konungs syni.

Þá mælti Bikki til Randvers,

‘Sannligt væri þat at þér ættið svá fríða konu, en eigi svá gamall maðr.’

Honum fellsk þat vel í skap, ok mælti til hennar með blíðu ok hvárt til annars. Koma heim í land ok hitta konung.

Bikki mælti, ‘Þat samir, herra, at vita hvat títt er um, þótt vant sé upp at bera, en þat er um vélar þær er sonr þinn hefir fengit fulla ást Svanhildar, ok er hon hans frilla, ok lát^d slíkt eigi óhegnt.’

Mörg ill ráð hafði hann honum áðr kennt, þó at þetta biti fyrir of hans ráð ill. Konungr hlýddi hans mörghum vándum ráðum. Hann mælti, ok mátti eigi stilla sik af reiði, at Randverr skyldi taka ok á gálga

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads* Gipt Svanhildir ok troðin undir hrossafótum til bana (*the final n of bana is missing in V*).

^b ok þykkir B

^c thus Ol, vatt V

^d thus Ol, om. V

¹ The sixth-century historian Jordanes includes in his *History of the Goths* an account of the Svanhild legend. He tells how Sarius (Sorli) and Ammius (Hamdir) take vengeance on Ermanaric for the slaying of Sunilda their sister whom he had torn apart by horses, though not for the same reasons as mentioned

There was a king called Jormunrek.¹ He was a powerful king of those days. His son's name was Randver. The king summoned his son to an audience.

'You must go on a mission for me to King Jonakr,' he said, 'and Bikki, my counsellor, shall go too. Svanhild, daughter of Sigurd Fafnisbane, has been brought up there. I know her for the most beautiful maiden under the sun. She it is whom I would marry above all others, and you shall ask for her hand on my behalf.'

'It is my duty, Sir, that I should go on your mission,' he said.

He now had worthy preparations made for their journey. They now travelled until they reached King Jonakr. They saw Svanhild and were most impressed with her beauty. Randver sought an audience of the king and said :

'King Jormunrek wishes to offer you an alliance by marriage. He has heard of Svanhild and wishes to choose her as his wife, and there's no certainty that she would be married to a man more powerful than he is.'

The king said it was a magnificent match—

'And he is greatly renowned.'

'It's unreliable to trust to good luck not breaking,' said Gudrun.

But due to the urging of the king and all that went with it, this was now agreed on, and Svanhild now went to the ship with a magnificent retinue and sat on the stern deck at the prince's side.

Then Bikki spoke to Randver :

'It would be more fitting for you than for such an old man to possess so beautiful a woman.'

This was greatly to his liking, and he spoke to her tenderly, as she did to him. They arrived back in their country and went to the king.

'It is only right, Sir,' said Bikki, 'that you should know what is going on, though it is not easy to speak of it—it is a question of trickery whereby your son has enjoyed to the full Svanhild's love, and she is his mistress. Don't let this go unpunished.'

He had already given him much evil advice, but of all his evil advice this was the crown. The king listened to his many wicked counsels. He could not contain himself for anger and said that Randver should

in *VS* and other Scandinavian versions. The best account of the relationship between the Scandinavian and the fragmentary German traditions is given in Schneider I, 243 ff.

fasta. Ok er hann var til leiddr gálgans, þá tók hann hauk einn ok plokkaði af honum allar fjaðrirnar, ok mælti at sýna skyldi feðr hans. Ok er konungrinn sá, mælti hann,

‘ Þar má nú sjá at honum þykkir ek þann veg hniginn ^a sœmðinni sem haukrinn fjöðrunum.’ Ok biðr hann taka af gálganum. Bikki hafði þar um vélt á meðan, ok var hann dauðr.

Enn mælti Bikki,

‘ Engum manni áttu verri at vera en Svanhildi. Lát hana deyja með skqmm.’

Konungr svarar, ‘ Þat ráð munu vér taka.’

Síðan var hon bundin í borgarhliði ok hleypt hestum at henni. En er hon brá í sundr augum, þá þorðu eigi hestarnir at sporna ^b hana. Ok er Bikki sá þat, mælti hann at belg skyldi draga á höfuð henni, ok svá var gert, en síðan lét hon líf sitt.

43

Guðrún ^c spyr nú líflát Svanhildar ok mælti við sonu sína,

‘ Hví siti þér svá kyrrir eða mælið gleðiorð, þar sem Jormunrekr drap systur ykkra ok trað undir hesta fótum með svívirðing? Ok ekki hafíð þit líkt skaplyndi Gunnari eða Högna. Hefna mundu þeir sinnar frændkonu.’

Hamðir svarar, ‘ Lítt lofaðir þú Gunnar ok Högna, þá er þeir drápu ^d Sigurð ok þú vart roðin í hans blóði, ok illar váru þínar bræðra hefndir er þú drapt sonu þína, ok betr mættim vér allir saman drepa Jormunrek konung, ok eigi munu vér standask frýjuorð, svá hart sem vér erum eggjaðir.’

Guðrún gekk hlæjandi ok gaf þeim at drekka af stórum kerum, ok eptir þat valði hon þeim stórar brynjur ok góðar ok qnnur herklæði. Þá mælti Hamðir,

‘ Hér munu vér skilja efsta sinni, ok spyrja muntu tíðending, ok muntu þá erfi drekka eptir okkr ok Svanhildi.’

Eptir þat fóru þeir. En Guðrún gekk til skemmu, harmi aukin, ok mælti,

‘ Þrimr mǫnnum var ek gipt, fyrst Sigurði Fáfnisbana, ok var hann svikinn, ok var þat mér inn mesti harmr. Síðan var ek gefin Atla konungi, en svá var grimmt mitt hjarta við hann at ek drap sonu okkra í

^a *B emends to hnuginn.*

^b *thus Ol, spora V*

^c *The preceding ch. heading reads Guðrún eggjar sonu sína at hefna Svanhildar.*

^d *thus Ol, drápuð V*

be seized and hanged on a gallows. And when he was led to the gallows he took a hawk and plucked out all its feathers and said that it was to be shown to his father. And when the king saw it he said :

‘ This shows that he thinks I’m just as bereft of honour as the hawk of feathers.’ And he ordered him to be taken down from the gallows. But in the meantime Bikki had been at work there, and he was dead.

Said Bikki again :

‘ There’s no one you have to be harsher towards than Svanhild. Let her die shamefully.’

‘ I shall take this advice,’ said the king.

She was then tied in the gate-way of the castle, and horses were made to charge at her. But when she opened wide her eyes the horses dared not trample her. And when Bikki saw this, he said that a bag should be drawn down over her head. This was done and then she met her death.

43

Gudrun heard now of Svanhild’s death and spoke to her sons :

‘ Why do you sit there so calmly and talk so cheerfully when Jormunrek has killed your sister, shamefully trampling her to death beneath horses’ hoofs ? You’ve neither of you the spirit of Gunnar or Hogni. They would avenge their kinswoman.’

‘ You had little praise for Gunnar and Hogni when they killed Sigurd and you were smeared with his blood,’ answered Hamdir, ‘ and killing your sons was an evil vengeance for your brothers, and we should be better able to kill Jormunrek if all of us were together. And we cannot stand your taunts, so hard do you press us.’

Gudrun went laughing and gave them to drink from great goblets, and after this she sought out for them large and excellent coats of mail, and other armour. Then Hamdir said :

‘ We shall part here for the last time, and you’ll hear the news and then you can give a funeral feast for us and for Svanhild.’

After this they set out. And Gudrun, her sorrow the greater, went to her room and said :

‘ I have been married to three husbands, first to Sigurd Fafnisbane. He was betrayed and that was my greatest sorrow. Then I was wedded to King Atli, and my heart was so ill-disposed towards him that I slew

harmi. Síðan gekk ek á sjáinn, ok hóf mik at landi með bárum, ok var ek nú gefin þessum konungi. Síðan gipta ek Svanhildi af landi í brott með miklu fé, ok er mér þat sárast minna harma er hon var troðin undir hrossa fótum, eptir Sigurð. En þat er mér grimmast er Gunnarr var í ormgarð settr, en þat harðast er ór Høgna var hjarta skorit, ok betr væri at Sigurðr kæmi mér á móti ok færi ek með honum. Hér sitr nú eigi eptir sonr né dóttir mik at hugga. Minnstu nú, Sigurðr, þess er vit mæltum, þá er vit stigum á einn beð, at þú mundir mín vitja ok ór helju bíða.'

Ok lýkr þar hennar harmtölum.

44

Þat ^a er nú at segja frá sonum Guðrúnar at hon hafði svá búit þeira herklæði at þá bitu eigi járn, ok hon bað þá eigi skeðja grjóti né qðrum stórum hlutum, ok kvað þeim þat at meini mundu verða ef eigi gerði þeir svá. Ok er þeir váru komnir á leið, finna þeir Erp, bróður sinn, ok spyrja hvat hann mundi veita þeim.

Hann svarar, 'Slíkt sem hønd hendi eða fótr fæti.'

Þeim þótti þat ekki vera ok drápu hann.¹ Síðan fóru þeir leiðar sinnar ok litla hríð áðr Hamðir rataði ok stakk niðr hendi ok mælti,

'Erpr mun satt hafa sagt. Ek munda falla nú ef eigi styddumk ek við høndina.'

Litlu síðar ratar Sqrli ok brásk á fótinn ok fekk staðizk ok mælti,

'Falla munda ek nú ef eigi stydda ek mik við báða fætr.'

Kváðusk þeir nú illa hafa gert við Erp, bróður sinn. Fóru nú unz þeir kómu til Jormunreks konungs, ok gengu fyrir hann ok veittu honum þegar tilræði. Hjó Hamðir af honum hendr báðar, en Sqrli fætr báða. Þá mælti Hamðir,

'Af mundi nú høfuðit ef Erpr lifði, bróðir okkarr, er vit vágum á leiðinni, ok sám vit þat of síð.'

Sem kveðit er :

(30) Af væri nú høfuðit,
ef Erpr lifði,

^a *The preceding ch. heading reads* Frá sonum Guðrúnar. Capitulum.

¹ Snorri explains further that they slew Erp because he was their mother's favourite and they wanted to pay her back for her taunts and jeers (see Jónsson, *SnE* 174), though *Hm.* st. 13 describes him as born of a different mother.

our sons in my grief. Then I walked into the sea and waves carried me ashore, and then I was wedded to this king. Afterwards I married off Svanhild into a foreign land with great wealth. And the keenest of my sorrows, after Sigurd, was when she was trampled down beneath the horses' hoofs. And most bitter when Gunnar was put in the snake pit, and the hardest when Hogni's heart was cut out. It would be better if Sigurd were to come to me and I to go with him. No son or daughter is now left to comfort me here. Remember, Sigurd, what we said when we shared the same bed, that you would visit me from the underworld, and wait for me there.'

And here her lamentations ceased.

44

The story now tells of Gudrun's sons, how she had so treated their armour that no iron could bite home, but she told them to do no damage to stones or other large objects, and said it would be a bad thing for them if they did not do as she said. And after they'd started out they came across their brother, Erp, and asked how he would help them.

'Like hand helps hand, or foot helps foot,' he answered.

They thought that this meant not at all, and they killed him.¹ Then they went on and it was only a short while before Hamdir tripped, thrust out a hand and said :

'Erp must have spoken the truth—I'd have fallen then if I hadn't steadied myself with my hand.'

Shortly afterwards Sorli tripped, shot out his foot, managed to recover his balance, and said :

'I'd have fallen then if I hadn't steadied myself with both feet.'

They now declared that they had acted wrongly towards their brother Erp. They travelled now until they reached King Jormunrek. They came into his presence and immediately attacked him. Hamdir struck off both his hands, and Sorli both his feet. Then Hamdir said :

'His head would now be off if our brother Erp, whom we killed on the way, were alive, but we've found this out too late.'

As the verse has it :

(30) Off now were his head,
were Erp alive,

bróðir okkarr inn bóðfrækni,
er vit á braut vágum.

Í því höfðu þeir af brugðit boði móður sinnar er þeir höfðu grjóti skatt.¹ Nú sækja menn at þeim, en þeir vörðusk vel ok drengiliga ok urðu mörqum manni at skaða. Þá bitu eigi járn. Þá kom at einn maðr,² hárr^a ok eldiligr, með eitt auga ok mælti,

‘Eigi eru þér vísir menn er þér kunnið eigi þeim mǫnnum bana at veita.’

Konungrinn svarar, ‘Gef oss ráð til ef þú kannt.’

Hann mælti, ‘Þér skuluð berja þá grjóti í hel.’

Svá var ok gert, ok þá flugu ór ǫllum áttum steinar at þeim, ok varð þeim þat at aldragi.

^a *thus Ol (cf. p. 5 Hann var hárr mjök ok eldiligr), om. V*

¹ The ‘damage’ presumably consists in the pollution of the stones of the road with their murdered brother’s blood.

² Odin.

our brother brave in battle
whom we butchered on the way.

They had disregarded their mother's instructions by causing damage to stones.¹ They were now attacked. And they defended themselves valiantly and well, and were the death of many a man. No iron bit home. Then a grey-haired man² of aged appearance and with one eye came up and said :

‘ You people aren't clever if you don't know how to slay these men.’

‘ Give us advice about it if you can,’ replied the king.

‘ You should stone them to death,’ he said.

So it was done, and then stones flew at them from all quarters, and this ended with their death.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A
TO VISIT ODIN

At sækja heim Óðin and similar expressions such as *hjá Óðni gista*, all meaning literally 'to visit Odin' or 'be Odin's guest', are used in the sense of 'to die in battle' (Odin was known as *Valföðr*: father of the slain), this ensuring entry into Odin's hall, Valhalla (*Valhöll*: hall of the slain), which was certainly 'a good thing' (see p. 3) from the heroic pagan point of view. Snorri tells us in *Ynglinga saga* (ch. 10): *gaf hann þá sumum sigr, en sumum bauð hann til sín; þótti hvárrtveggi kostr góðr*—to some he then gave victory, others he called to him; either way seemed good. Rerir does not die in battle, but of sickness, and there are grounds for the belief (see H. M. Chadwick, *The cult of Othin*, London 1899, 13 f.) that a man mortally ill might be marked with the point of a javelin, being thereby dedicated to Odin (the javelin was a weapon especially associated with him), and thus presumably made one with the *Eiðherjar*, the dead heroes who spend their days in fighting and carousing with Odin in Valhalla (*SnE*, *Gylfaginning* ch. 41) until the Doom of the Gods is at hand (*SnE*, *Gylf*. ch. 51).

APPENDIX B

ASLAUG AND HEIMIR

Heimir í Hlymdöllum spyrr nú þessi tíðendi at dauðr er Sigurðr ok Brynhildi en Áslaug, dóttir þeira, en fóstura Heimis, var þá þrétvetr. Veit hann nú at eptir mun leitast at týna meyjunni ok ætt hennar. Er honum svá mikill harmr eptir Brynhildi, fósturu sína, at hann gætti ekki ríkis síns né fjár. Sér nú at hann fær eigi meyjunni þar leynt. Lætr nú gera eina hörpu svá mikla at þar lét hann meyna Áslaugu í koma ok margar gersimar í gulli ok silfri, ok gengr á brott síðan víða um lönd, ok um síðir hingast á Norðrlönd. Svá var harpa hans hagliga ger at hana mátti taka í sundr ok saman at fellingum, ok var hann því vanr um daga, þá er hann fór í hjá vatnföllum ok hvergi í nánd bæjum, at hann tók hörpuna í sundr ok þó meyjunni. Ok hann hafði vínlauk einn ok gaf henni at eta. En þat er náttúra þess lauks at maðr má lengi lifa, þótt hann hafi enga aðra fæðu. Ok þá er mærin grét, sló hann hörpuna, ok þagnaði hon þá, fyrir því at Heimir var vel at íþróttum búinn þeim er þá váru tíðar. Hann hafði ok mörg klæði dýrðlig hjá henni í hörpunni ok mikitt gull.

Ok nú ferr hann þangat til unz hann kemr í Nóreg ok kemr til eins býjar lítils þess er heitir á Spangarheiði, ok bjó þar karl sá er Áki hét. Hann átti konu, ok hét hon Gríma. Þar var eigi fleira manna en þau.

Þann dag var karl farinn í skóg, en kerling var heima, ok heilsar hon Heimi ok spyrr hvat manna hann væri. Hann kvezk vera einn stafkarl, ok það kerlingu húsa. Hon segir at eigi kæmi þar fleira en svá at hon kvezk mundu vel við honum taka, ef hann þœttisk þurfa þar at vera. En er á leið, þá segir hann at honum þœtti þat mest beinabót at eldr væri kveyktr fyrir honum, ok síðan væri honum fylgt til svefnhúss þar er hann skyldi sofa. Ok þá er kerling hafði kveykt eldinn, þá setr hann hörpuna upp í set hjá sér, en kerling var óðamálug. Opt varð henni litit til hörpunnar fyrir því at trefr á einu dýrðligu klæði kómu út ór hörpunni. Ok er hann bakaðisk við eldinn, þá sér hon einn dýrðligan gullhring koma fram undan töttrum hans, því at hann var illa klæddr. Ok er hann hafði bakazk sem hann kunni sér þörf til, þá hafði hann náttverð. En eptir þat það hann kerlingu fylgja sér þangat til sem hann skyldi sofa um nóttina. Þá segir kerling at honum mundi betra vera úti en inni—

‘Því at vit karl minn erum opt málug er hann kemr heim.’

Hann biðr hana ráða, gengr nú út ok svá hon. Hann tekr hörpuna ok hefir með sér. Kerling gengr út ok ferr þar til er bygglaða ein er, ok fylgir honum þar til, ok mælti at hann skyldi þar um búask, ok kvezk þess vænta at hann

APPENDIX B

ASLAUG AND HEIMIR

Heimir heard the news in Hlymdalir that Sigurd and Brynhild were dead, and Aslaug, their daughter, Heimir's foster-daughter, was then three years old. He knew they would seek to kill the girl and her family. So great was his grief for his foster-daughter, Brynhild, that he gave no heed to kingdom or wealth. He now saw that he would be unable to hide the girl there. So he had a harp made big enough for him to get the girl into it along with many treasures of gold and silver, and then he went away, journeying far and wide, and eventually came up here to the northern countries. His harp was so skilfully made that he could take it apart and put it together again at the joints, and during the day when he was near water courses and nowhere in the neighbourhood of dwellings he was accustomed to take the harp apart and wash the girl. And he had a certain herb and gave her to eat of it, and such is the nature of this herb that a man may live for a long time even if he has no other food. And when the girl cried, he played the harp, and she would then grow quiet, for Heimir was highly skilled in the arts then practised. He also had many magnificent garments and a great deal of gold with her in the harp.

And now he journeyed until he came to Norway, to a small farmstead called Spangarheid, where there lived a man named Aki. He had a wife and she was named Grima. Apart from them, there were no other people there.

That day the man had gone into the woods, but the woman was at home and greeted Heimir and asked who he was. He said he was a beggar and asked the woman for shelter. She declared that so few people came there that, as she said, she would welcome him if he thought he needed to stay there. And after a while he said he would think it most hospitable if a fire were to be lit for him, and if he were then shown to the room he was to sleep in. And when the woman had lit the fire, he placed the harp beside him on the seat. But the woman was very talkative. She often glanced at the harp, for the fringe of a valuable piece of cloth was protruding from the harp. And when he warmed himself at the fire she saw a valuable ring appear from beneath his rags, for he was poorly clad. And when he had warmed himself as much as he thought was necessary, he had his supper. And after this he asked the woman to show him to where he was to spend the night. The woman then said that he would be better off outside rather than inside—

‘ Because when my husband comes home, the two of us often talk a lot.’

He said she knew best. So he went out, and so did she. He took the harp and kept it by him. Going out, the woman went over to a barley-barn, showed him to it and said that he was to bed down there, adding that she expected he

mundi þar njóta svefnis síns. Ok nú gengr kerling í brott ok annask þat er hon þurfti, en hann gerir sér svefn.

Karl kemr heim er aptanninn líðr, en kerling hefir fátt unnit þat er hon þurfti. En hann var móðr er hann kom heim, ok illr viðskiptis, er allt var óbúið þat er hon skyldi annazk hafa. Sagði karl at mikill væri munr sælu, er hann vann hvern dag meira en hann mátti, en hon vildi til enkis taka þess er gagn var at.

‘Ver eigi reiðr, karl minn,’ sagði hon, ‘fyrir því at þat kann at vera at þú mættir nú skamma stund vinna til þess at vit værim sæl alla ævi.’

‘Hvat er þat?’ segir karl.

Kerling svarar, ‘Hér er kominn til herbergis okkars einn maðr, ok ætla ek at hann hafi allmikil fé með at fara, ok er hniginn á efra aldr, ok mun verit hafa inn mesti kappi ok er nú þó móðr mjök, ok eigi þykkjumk ek hans maka sét hafa, ok þó ætla ek hann mæddan ok syfjaðan.’

Þá segir karl, ‘Þat sýnisk mér óráðligt at svíkja þá ina fá sem hér koma.’

Hon svarar, ‘Því muntu lengi lítill fyrir þér at þér vex allt í augu, ok ger nú annathvært, at þú drep hann, eða ek tek hann mér til manns, ok munu vit reka þik í brott. Ok segja kann ek þér þá ræðu er hann mælti við mik í gærkveld, en lítills mun þér þykkja um vert. Hann mælti kvensamliga við mik, ok þat mun mitt ráð vera at taka hann mér til manns, en reka þik í brott eða drepa ef þú vill eigi eptir því gera sem ek vil.’

Ok er þat sagt at karl hafði kvánríki, ok telr hon um þangat til er hann lætr at eggjan hennar, tekr Øxi sína ok snarbrýnir mjök. Ok er hann er búinn, fylgir kerling honum þar til er Heimir sefr, ok var þar hrytr mikill. Þá mælti kerling til karls at hann skyldi láta verða tilræði sem bezt—

‘Ok skunda brott með hlaupi, því at ekki máttu standask lát hans ok óp ef hann fær þik hönðum tekit.’

Hon tekr hǫrpuna ok hleypr á brott með. Nú gengr karl þar til er Heimir sefr. Hann hǫggr til hans, ok verðr þat mikit sár, ok verðr honum laus øxin. Hann hleypr þegar í brott sem hann mátti hraðast. Nú vaknar hann við áverkann, ok vannsk honum at fullu. Ok þat er sagt at svá mikill gnýr varð í hans fjörbrotum at undan gengu súlur í húsinu ok ofan fell húsit allt, ok varð landskjálfti mikill, ok lýkr þar hans ævi.

Nú kom karl þar sem kerling var, segir nú at hann hefir drepit hann—

‘Ok þó var þat of hrið er ek vissi eigi hvé fara mundi, ok þessi maðr var furðu mikill fyrir sér, en þó væntir mik at hann sé nú í helju.’

Kerling mælti at hann skyldi hafa þökk fyrir verkit—

‘Ok væntir mik at nú hafim vit ærit fé, ok skulum vit reyna hvárt ek hefi satt sagt.’

would sleep well there. And now the woman went away and busied herself with necessary tasks, and he settled down to sleep.

Later in the evening the man came home, but the woman had got through very few of her tasks. And he was weary when he came home and surly in manner, for all the things she should have been seeing to were not done. The man said there was a great difference in the happiness of his lot and hers—every day he worked more than his strength allowed, while she would never get on with anything useful.

‘Don’t be angry, husband,’ she said, ‘because perhaps you might quickly contrive for us to be happy all our days.’

‘How?’ said the man

‘A man has come to our home,’ the woman replied, ‘and I imagine he has a great deal of wealth along with him, and he’s stricken in years and must have been a mighty champion, but now he’s very weary, and I don’t think I’ve ever seen his like, but I imagine he’s exhausted and sleepy.’

Then the man said: ‘I don’t think it’s wise to betray the few people that come here.’

‘You’ll be a nobody for a long time,’ she answered, ‘because you’ve got scruples about everything. And now do one thing or the other—either you kill him, or I shall take him for my husband, and the two of us will drive you away. And I can tell you the words he spoke to me this very evening, but you won’t care! He spoke to me amorously, and my plan will be to take him for my husband and to drive you away or kill you if you won’t do as I wish.’

And it is said that the man was henpecked, and she kept on about it until he gave way to her goadings—he took his axe and put a good, keen edge on it. And when he was ready the woman showed him to where Heimir was sleeping, and there was a loud snoring. The woman told her husband to attack him as best he might—

‘And make off quickly for you’ll not be able to stand his shrieks and screams if he gets his hands on you.’

She picked up the harp and ran off with it. Then the man went up to where Heimir was sleeping. He struck at him, making a deep wound, but dropped his axe. He immediately made off as quickly as he could.

He awoke with the wound, and it had done for him completely, and it is told that he made such an uproar in his death throes that the supports in the house gave way, and the whole house collapsed, and there was a violent earthquake, and there his life ended. The man now went to the woman, and now told her that he had killed him—

‘Though for a time I didn’t know how things would turn out, and that man was very strong, but I expect that he’s now in the underworld.’

The woman said that she thanked him for the deed—

‘And I expect that we’ve now ample wealth, and we’ll find out whether I’ve told the truth.’

Nú kveykva þau eld, en kerling tekr hǫrpuna ok vildi upp koma ok mátti eigi annars kostar en hon varð at brjóta því at hon hafði eigi hagleik til. Ok nú fær hon upp komit hǫrpunni, ok þar sér hon eitt meybarn, at hon þóttisk ekki slíkt sét hafa, ok þó var mikit fé í hǫrpunni. Nú mælti karl,

‘ Þat mun nú verða sem opt, at illa man gefask at svíkja þann er honum trúir. Sýnisk mér sem komin muni ómegð á hendr okkr.’

Kerling svarar, ‘ Eigi er þetta eptir því sem ek ætlaða^a, en þó skal nú ekki um sakask.’

Ok nú spyr hon hverrar ættar hon væri. En þessi in unga mæR svarar engu, svá sem hon hefði eigi mál numit.

‘ Nú ferr sem mik varði, at okkart ráð mundi illa fara,’ segir karl. ‘ Vit hǫfum unnit glæp mikinn. Hvat skulum vit sjá fyrir barni þessu ?’

‘ Auðvitat er þat,’ sagði Gríma. ‘ Hon skal eptir móður minni heita Kráka.’

Nú mælti karl, ‘ Hvat skulum vit sjá fyrir barni þessu ?’

Kerling svarar, ‘ Ek sé gott ráð til. Vit skulum segja hana okkra dóttur ok upp fæða.’

‘ Því mun engi trúa,’ sagði karl. ‘ Miklu er barn þetta geðsligra en vit. Erum allóvæn bæði, ok munu engi líkendi á þykkja at vit munum eiga þvílíkt barn, svá endemlig sem vit erum bæði.’

Nú mælti kerling, ‘ Eigi veiztu nema ek hafa í nokkur brögð at þetta megi eigi óvænt þykkja. Ek mun láta gera henni koll ok ríða í tjöru ok qöru er vænst er at sízt komi hár upp. Hon skal eiga hǫtt síðan. Eigi skal hon ok vel klædd vera. Mun þá saman draga vár yfirlit. Má vera at menn trúi því, at ek hafa mjök væn verit, þá er ek var ung. Hon skal ok vinna þat er verst er.’

En þat hugðu þau karl ok kerling at hon mætti ekki mæla er hon svarar þeim aldri. Nú er þat gert sem kerling hefir fyrir hugat. Nú vex hon þar upp í miklu fátæki.

^a thus B, emending ætla V (Ol retains MS reading)

They now kindled a fire and the woman took hold of the harp and tried to open it, and she had no choice but to break it open, for she hadn't the skill. And now she managed to get the harp open, and there she saw a little girl, the like of whom she thought she'd never seen before, and there was also a large amount of treasure in the harp. The man now said :

'It's going to turn out badly—it often does when you betray a person who trusts you. It looks to me as if we have a helpless waif on our hands.'

'That is not what I thought,' answered the woman. 'But we'll not complain about it now.'

And now she asked who her family was. But the young girl made no reply as if she had never learned to speak.

'It's just as I thought,' said the man, 'that things would go badly with us. We've committed a terrible crime. What are we to do with this child?'

'That's easy,' said Grima. 'She shall be called Kraka after my mother.'

Then the man said : 'What shall we do with this child?'

'I have a good plan,' answered the woman. 'We'll say she is our daughter and we'll bring her up.'

'No one will believe it,' said the man. 'The child is far more attractive than either of us. We're both very ugly and no one will think it likely that we would have a child like this, queer-looking as we both are.'

The old woman now said : 'You don't know but what I may have a trick or two to make it seem not improbable. I shall shave her head and rub in tar and other things, making it unlikely that any hair would grow. She shall have a long hood and she won't be well dressed, either ! Then we shall look more like each other. Perhaps people will believe that I was very pretty when I was young. She shall also do the worst chores.'

And the man and his wife thought that she couldn't talk because she never answered them. What the old woman had planned was now done. She now grew up there in great poverty.

APPENDIX C

THE GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN *VOLSRUNGA SAGA* AND ITS EXTANT LITERARY SOURCES

<i>VS</i> ch. 8	p. 14 þá konu er Borghildr hét -Hámundr	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Sf.</i> ll. 2-3
	p. 14 Ok er Helgi var fœddr- end of ch. 9, p. 17	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>HH</i> I, st. 1-2, 7-11, 13-26, 28-56 (end)
<i>VS</i> ch. 10	p. 17 -end of ch., p. 19	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Sf.</i>
<i>VS</i> ch. 14	p. 25 Einn dvergr hét- þá mælti Loki	cf. <i>PE</i> , Prose introduction to <i>Rm.</i> ll. 9-21 (end)
	p. 25 st. 2-3	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Rm.</i> st. 1-2
	p. 26 Loki sér gull-þá kvað Loki	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Rm.</i> st. 5 and the prose passages immediate- ly before and after it
	p. 26 st. 4	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Rm.</i> st. 6
<i>VS</i> ch. 16	p. 28 Grípir hét maðr-gekk síðan (a very brief summary of the <i>PE</i> equivalent)	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Grp.</i>
<i>VS</i> ch. 17	p. 29 st. 5	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Rm.</i> st. 18
<i>VS</i> ch. 18	p. 31 Hverr ertu-p. 32 Hann heitir Óskaptr	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 1-15 l. 1
	p. 32 Reginn bróðir minn-þá sem han vildi	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 22 ll. 1-3
	p. 32 Ek bar ægishjálms-míns bróður	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 16 ll. 1-3
	p. 32 ok sva fnýsta-í nánd mér	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 18
	p. 32 ok engi vápn-hvatastr	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 16-17
	p. 32 þat ræð ek-sem skjótast	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 20 ll. 1-3
	p. 32 þetta eru þín ráð-hafa átt	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 21 ll. 1-3
	p. 32 ok þat sama gull-er þat á	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 20 ll. 4-6
	p. 32 en hverr frœkn maðr- dags	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 10 ll. 1-3
	p. 32 En þá Fáfnir-end of ch.	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 21 ll. 4-6
<i>VS</i> ch. 19	p. 33 Heill, herra minn-sitja	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Fm.</i> st. 23

- VS* ch. 19 p. 33 Bróður minn-á grasinu cf. *PE, Fm.* st. 25 ll. 4-6, ll. 1-3 (also prose passage after st. 22)
- p. 33 Fjarri gekk þú-hvasst sverð cf. *PE, Fm.* st. 28-30
- p. 33 þú drapt-saklauss cf. *PE, Fm.* st. 25 ll. 4-6
- p. 33 þá skar Sigurðr-eta cf. *PE, Fm.* prose passage after st. 26, st. 27
- p. 33 Sigurðr fór ok steikti-ch. 20, p. 34 þat it mikla gull cf. *PE, Fm.* prose passage after st. 31, st. 32-4
- VS* ch. 20 p. 34 ok riði síðan upp-speki cf. *PE, Fm.* st. 42-4
- p. 34 ok þá væri hann vitren sumt hirðir hann cf. *PE, Fm.* st. 35-9, and the following prose passage
- p. 34 ok reið eptir slóð-ch. 21, p. 35 færði Sigurði ok mælti cf. the prose passage at the end of *Fm.*, the prose passage at the beginning of *Sd.*, *Sd.* st. 1-2, and the prose passage after *Sd.* st. 2.
- VS* ch. 21 p. 35 st. 6 cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 5
- p. 36 st. 7-10 cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 6, 10, 12, 7,
- p. 37 st. 11-15 cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 8, 9, 11, 13, 15
- p. 38 st. 16-18 cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 16-18
- p. 39 st. 19-21 cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 19-21
- VS* ch. 22 p. 39 ver vel við frændr þína-p. 40 á þik koma cf. *PE, Sd.* st. 22, 32, 24-31, 23, 33-5, 37
- VS* ch. 23 p. 40-41 cf. *ÞSS*, ch. 291
- VS* ch. 32 p. 57 Eptir þetta-gengi frá honum cf. *PE, Sg.* st. 6-14 l. 6
- p. 57 Brynhildr er mér-hennar ást cf. *PE, Sg.* st. 15
- p. 57 ok kalla-bróður sinn cf. *PE, Sg.* st. 14 ll. 7-10
- p. 57 fyrir mik-alla eiða cf. *PE, Sg.* st. 16-20
- p. 58 st. 26 cf. *PE, Br.* st. 4. (*VS* st. 26 is a poor and incomplete variant)
- p. 58 þá tók Sigurðr sverðit-p. 59 vinr hans konu cf. *PE, Sg.* st. 22-8
- p. 59 ok ef ek hefða vitat-villigölt cf. *ÞSS*, Bertelsen II, 266 ll. 17-24 (but see Introduction p. xxxvii)

- VS* ch. 32 p. 59 En Guðrún blæs-hafa meira vald cf. *PE*, *Sg.* st. 29-33
- p. 59 Frændr mínir-í her fyrst cf. *PE*, *Br.* st. 6
- p. 59 Nú þóttisk engi-eitri var hert cf. *PE*, *Br.* st. 15-19
- p. 59 Ok snemma réðu- p. 60 engum qðrum cf. *PE*, *Sg.* st. 34-6, 38-39
- p. 60 ok eigi mun yðr-deyja cf. *PE*, *Sg.* st. 53 ll. 5-8
- p. 60 þá reis Gunnarr-ch. 33, p. 61 sagða ek þó satt cf. *PE*, *Sg.* st. 42-51, 53 l. 4, 54-6, 58-60, 62-71 (end)
- VS* ch. 34 p. 61 Nú segir þat-heimrinn stendr cf. *PSS*, Bertelsen II, 268, ll. 9-17 (but see Introduction p. xxxvii)
- p. 61 Betra var þá-p. 62 loða rauða cf. *PE*, *Gðr.* II, st. 1-5, 11-19 l. 8
- p. 62 st . 27 cf. *PE*, *Gðr.* II, st. 19 ll. 9-12
- p. 62 þeir vildu velja-p.63 með blóði cf. *PE*, *Gðr.* II, st. 20-1
- p. 63 st. 28-9 cf. *PE*, *Gðr.* II, st. 22-3
- p. 63 ok eptir þat-ch. 35, p. 65 at ek lægi í kqr (end) cf. *PE*, *Gðr.* II, st. 24-44
- VS* ch. 35 p. 65 gerir nú ráð-eldar stórir cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 1-5, *Akv.* st. 1
- p. 65 ok síðan drukku-drykk cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 8, *Akv.* st. 2
- p. 65 Atli konungr sendi-at vit farim cf. *PE*, *Akv.* st. 3-8
- p. 65 Nú gengr alþýða- p. 66 allmjök drukknir cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 9, 6
- p. 66 Ekki er því-bezt at njóta cf. *PSS*, Bertelsen II, 281, ll. 9-14 (but see Introduction, p. xxxvii)
- p. 66 heitr nú ferðinni-aðrir villt cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 7 l. 5-st. 12
- VS* ch. 36 p. 66 Þat dreymði mik at mér -stokka í hqllini cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 26 ll. 1-4
- p. 66 þér cruð opt-boðinu cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 13, 14 ll. 1-4
- p. 66 ok enn dreymði mik-vera nqkkut cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 26
- p. 66 þat dreymði mik-ch. 37, p. 67 aðrir lqttu cf. *PE*, *Am.* st. 15-21, 24, 25, 28-30 l. 4

- VS* ch. 37 p. 67 Fjörðirnir hét-p. 68 góðan tíma cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 10-12
- p. 68 eptir var meiri-ekki skip sín cf. *PE, Am.* st. 30 l. 5-
st. 37
- p. 68 Síðan riðu þeir-konungsbæinn cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 13 ll. 1-4, 14
l. 1, *Am.* 38 ll. 3-4
- p. 68 þangat heyra-full af mǫnnum cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 14 ll. 2-8
- p. 68 þeir ríða at-ch. 38, í millum þeira cf. *PE, Am.* st. 38 l. 5-
st. 42 l. 4
- VS* ch. 38 p. 69 Fyrir lǫngu-ná yðru lífi cf. *PE, Am.* st. 42 l. 7
- p. 69 Þat kemr yðr-ch. 39, p.70 harða sokn cf. *PE, Am.* st. 43-58
- VS* ch. 39 p. 70 Nú er sótt at Gunnari-höndum tekinn cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 18-19
- p. 70 Mikil furða-hans bani cf. *PE, Am.* st. 59 ll. 1-4
- p. 70 Geri sem þér líkar-p. 71 fjǫrit cf. *PE, Am.* st. 60-4
- VS* ch. 39 p. 71 Nú eru þeir-Gunnarr ok Högni cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 18
- p. 71 þá mælti Atli konungr-i brjósti honum lá cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 20-3
- p. 71 Nú gengu þeir-at minnum haft cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 24 ll. 1-4,
Am. st. 65
- p. 71 þeir sýndu-fast bundnar cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 24 l. 5-
31 l. 2
- p. 71 Guðrún sendi honum-höndum slegit cf. *PE, Am.* st. 66
- VS* ch. 40 p. 72 Atli konungr-vid mik ráða cf. *PE, Am.* st. 67-73
- p. 72 Gerir hon sik-bræðr mína cf. *PE, Am.* st. 74-80
- p. 72 Nú skaltu heyra-en þú ázt cf. *PE, Am.* st. 81 l. 8-
st. 83
- p. 73 Grimm ertu-at frænda ráði cf. *PE, Am.* st. 85-*Am.*
st. 93
- p. 73 ok mund galt-p. 74 gerði sem hon hét cf. *PE, Am.* st. 95-104 l. 4
- p. 74 síðan lét hon slá-hirðar hans cf. *PE, Akv.* st. 41-2
- p. 74 Guðrún vildi nú-fornkvæðum cf. *PE, Am.* st. 104 ll. 5-8,
st. 105

<i>VS</i> ch. 41	p. 74	Guðrún gekk eitt sinn— upp fædd	cf. <i>PE</i> prose introduction to <i>Ghv.</i> and <i>Ghv.</i> st. 13–15
<i>VS</i> ch. 43	p. 76	Guðrún spyr—p. 77 ór helju bíða	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Ghv.</i> st. 1 l. 4—st. 19
<i>VS</i> ch. 44	p. 77	Ok er þeir váru komnir —ok drápu hann	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Hm.</i> st. 11–13, 15
	p. 77	Hjó Hamðir—of síð	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Hm.</i> st. 24, 28
	p. 77	st. 30	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Hm.</i> st. 281 ll. 1–4
	p. 78	þá bitu—end	cf. <i>PE</i> , <i>Hm.</i> st. 25 (According to F. Jónsson, <i>Litt.</i> II, 837 the compiler used not the extant <i>Hm.</i> , but a later non-extant variant which included Odin's intervention.)

(N.B. The prose sections of *PE* were not necessarily used by the compiler for the equivalent passages of *VS*—see Introduction p. xxxvi, n. 9.)

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Alfar It is possible that the *álfar* were originally the souls of the dead, or the souls of the unborn or of those awaiting rebirth, though they have also been thought of as fertility spirits. The term came to signify a class of mythical beings who were occasionally mentioned together with the Æsir and were possessed of supernatural powers, but in some respects akin to men and capable of forming intimate relationships with them (e.g. in *Hrólf's saga Kraka*, King Helgi's daughter, Skuld, is born of an elfwoman, in *Piðriks saga* Hogni's father is an elf), and finally confused with the dwarfs (see Glossary s.v. *dvergar*). Snorri (*SnE, Gylf.* ch. 17) divides the elves into *Ljósálfar* ('light elves') who dwell in Alfheim and are fairer than the sun, and *Dökkálfar* who dwell in the earth and are blacker than pitch. The God Frey is associated with Alfheim in *Grímnismál* st. 5 (*PE*). (See de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 257 ff. and N. K. Chadwick, 'Norse Ghosts,' *Folklore* LVII (1946), 58).

Dísir These were supernatural female beings who acted as guardian spirits and may have come to be considered as dead members of the same family. At one time they probably enjoyed a cult of their own. The *dísir* often merged into other supernatural Norse women: as protective spirits they are akin to *ættarfylgjur* and *fylgjukonur*, at times they are thought of as helping in child birth and performing other functions often ascribed to the Norns. The appearance of the *dísir* could also herald battle and death. It is probable that they were originally spirits connected with fertility (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* II, 297 ff.).

Dvergar These were the dwarfs, mythical beings of small stature, human in shape, and held to dwell underground or in rocks and cliffs, and to shun the light. They were renowned as metal workers. According to one source (*PE, Vǫluspá*, st. 10) the Æsir created the first pair of dwarfs who then seemingly fashioned more of their own kind from the earth; according to Snorri (*SnE, Gylf.* ch. 14) they originated as maggots in the flesh of the primæval giant, Ymir, out of whose body the world was created. They appear to be later more sophisticated representations of what were originally the spirits of the dead, or nature spirits (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 252 ff.).

Fylgja A personification of the essential nature or power of an individual or family. It often appeared in the form of an animal whose nature corresponded to the name or character of the individual it represented. The family wraiths (*ættarfylgjur*) were protective spirits who were often seen in female form.

(cf. de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 224-228; G. Turville-Petre, 'Liggja fylgjur þínar til Íslands', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* XII (1937-45), 119-26.)

Hamingja The word *hamingja* could mean the 'luck' that a given person is born with and which could be transferred to others. At the same time, it seems to have had a rather more concrete connotation and to have been thought of as a kind of guardian spirit. The word may derive from *hamr*, combining its two meanings of 'the external (visible) shape the spirit could assume' and 'caul' (see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 174, 222 f.).

Hel often used simply to connote 'death', was the dread goddess of the principal underworld known to Norse mythology: Snorri (*SnE, Gylf.* ch. 34) describes her as ruling over those who die of sickness or old age, thus making a neat contrast with his description of Odin's hall, Valhall, the abode of those slain in battle (*SnE, Gylf.* ch. 20), though literary art rather than genuine belief may be uppermost. The name Hel is also given to the underworld itself, Snorri, perhaps due to Christian influence, hinting at a degree of misery probably absent from actual pagan belief (*SnE, Gylf.* ch. 34).

Morð 'murder' (*morð*) as opposed to 'manslaughter' (*víg*) was considered to be a particularly odious crime which put the perpetrator outside the law. The distinction between *morð* and *víg* did not lie in the presence or absence of 'malice aforethought', but in that of *víglýsing*, the immediate avowal of the deed at one of the three nearest houses to the scene of the crime. Killing without such avowal was considered to be *morð*, unless, according to *Gisla saga* ch. 13, an identifiable weapon were left in the wound (in which case the term *launvíg*, 'secret manslaughter' was used). *Víg* could be atoned for by paying compensation to the bereaved family (or if none existed to those prosecuting the suit) if they were agreeable. This was not normally the case with *morð* which carried with it the penalty of outlawry (see Fritzner, *Ordbog* II, 731; Cleasby-Vigfusson, 434; Hoops IV. 342).

Mundr The marriage settlement (*mundr*) was an agreed sum payable by the groom for his bride, without which no marriage was valid, and which became her personal property.

Nafnfestr The formal naming of a child (called *nafnfestr*) was normally preceded by the sprinkling of the child with water (*ausa barn vatni*) a pagan rite distinct from but having certain elements in common with Christian baptism (*skírn*), and followed by the bestowal, then or later, of a gift (also called *nafnfestr*). This pagan 'baptism' may ultimately owe its origin

to early contacts between pagan Northmen and Christian Anglo-Saxons. It certainly had a legal significance since until the ceremony was performed the child could be exposed and did not have full legal rights. For a full discussion see K. Maurer, *Über die Wasserweihe des germanischen Heidenthumes*, Abhandlungen der königlichen bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (philosophisch-philologische Classe) XV, 1881. Against the idea of a Christian origin see de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 179 f. W. Baetke, *Christliches Lehngut in der Sagareligion*, 1952, 25 ff. strongly supports the theory of Christian provenance.

Nornir The Norns were a personified expression of the Norse conception of fate (*sköp*). They were sometimes thought of as female supernatural beings who were present at every birth, both to render assistance as midwives and also to shape the child's destiny (see esp. *SnE*, *Gylfaginning* ch. 15). There seems to have been an indefinite number of these supernatural women but they tend to appear in groups of three. A second conception arising partly out of this belief was akin to that of the Roman Parcae; there were in particular three Norns, known as *Urðr*, *Verðandi* and *Skuld*, who were held to determine men's fate and who at times, like their classical counterparts, seem to be associated with weaving and spinning (cf. Poetic Edda, *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, st. 3, l. 1, *Reginmál*, st. 14, ll. 7-8). The Norns, as is the case with most of the supernatural or supernaturally endowed women of Norse literature, do not form a clear-cut conception. Sometimes they are called *dísir* (or *spádisir*), which is also used occasionally of valkyries (who exercise some influence on men's fate).

Seiðkona The *seiðkona* was a woman (*kona*) highly skilled in the exercise of the magic art (*seiðr*) whereby she could effect an exchange of appearances, or lay a curse on an enemy, cause madness, foretell the future, etc. She was not seldom malignant. The *seiðkona* had a male counterpart in the *seiðmaðr*.

Troll Trolls were generally conceived of as monstrous, gigantic beings, usually, if not always, evilly disposed. *Troll hafi þik* was a pagan equivalent of 'go to the devil'. They are not clearly distinguishable from *jötvar* and *þursar*, the giants. The origin of trolls and giants is not clear. They may be in part personified aspects of natural phenomena, in part they may be the result of hallucinatory images produced by various conditions such as hunger. They figure largely in Norse mythology as the enemies of the gods and as the *primaeval* inhabitants of the world. In the beginning was *Ymir* the giant. A good account of giants and trolls in their Norse and more general Germanic setting is given by de Vries, *Altgerm. Religion* I, 241 ff.

Valkyrja valkyrie. The word basically signifies 'chooser of the slain'. The valkyries were Odin's handmaidens whose main duty it was to sway the

course of battles and conduct the slain to Valhalla. The conception of valkyries as armed, mounted supernatural warrior-maidens is very probably a poetic development of an earlier and cruder belief in savage elemental beings who rejoiced in bloodshed and carnage (cf. Hoops IV, 475; Nora K. Chadwick, 'The Monsters and Beowulf' in *The Anglo Saxons, studies . . . presented to Bruce Dickens*, 1959, 177). In Norse literature the valkyries are sometimes confused with *skjaldmeyjar* (shield-maidens), a conception akin to the amazon idea. (From the earliest Germanic times women had taken part in battles, cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 8).

Völva The *völva* was a *seiðkona* (q.v.) who exercised a predominantly mantic function. She always carried a staff (*vǫlr*) which may well account for her name. An excellent description of the *völva* and her art is to be found in *Eiríks saga rauða* ch. 4.

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